



PRAIRIE LAND PRIDE

Small schools preparing students for big futures.

Prairie Land Public School Division

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First Student Entrepreneurship Intern at JCC

Reid Hickle, a talented woodworking student with a passion for craftsmanship, has been hired as the first Student Entrepreneurship Intern with the Hanna Community School Enhancement Society.

The paid internship, which runs this semester, offers Hickle a unique opportunity to blend his creative skills with the world of business development.

“Reid was chosen due to his keenness and skill set demonstrated in Industrial Arts class,” explains Principal Corry Raugust, adding that depending on the success of the program, they hope to expand the program to other students who demonstrate the skill set and attitude to explore a project of this nature.

The internship is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, product development, marketing, and sales all through J.C. Charyk Hanna School’s Innovation Academy.

“It allows students like Hickle to explore new business ventures while working closely with mentors and using the school’s technology and equipment to bring their ideas to life.”

Hickle’s journey began through his growing reputation for creating beautiful, functional woodworking pieces, including custom resin tables and charcuterie boards.

His craftsmanship caught the attention of school administrators who saw potential for Hickle’s skills to complement the goals of the internship.

As part of the internship, Reid will be tasked with developing a new business venture, from creating a business plan and generating products to executing advertising campaigns and sales strategies.

“Reid will be working through the Enterprise and Innovation program of studies to create a business plan that includes: cost of materials, profit margins, advertising, feasibility,” said Raugust.

His experience in creating one-of-a-kind wooden pieces will be key as he explores how to develop and market his products effectively.

“This opportunity is a promising start to Hickle’s future as both a craftsman and an entrepreneur.”

Reid Hickle, a Grade 11 student at JCC, shows off the craftsmanship that goes into his woodworking projects. Hickle is the first Student Entrepreneurship Intern through the school’s Innovation Academy.



University of New Brunswick REDS Scholarship Recipients

Extrremely talented student-athletes can be found throughout Prairie Land—some of whom will go on to have successful college or university level sports careers.

In 2024 the division partnered with the University of New Brunswick to create a unique opportunity for select Grade 11 and 12 Prairie Land students.

Athletic Directors from around the division nominate athletes in their schools and programs that fit the label of student-athlete and could potentially participate at the Canadian University level (U Sport).

“After careful consideration by the selection committee, three exceptional student-athletes have been chosen from an outstanding field of candidates throughout Prairie Land,” said Superintendent Cam McKeage.

The recipients of the 2025 University of New Brunswick REDS Scholarship are:

- Katie Hadwin – Volleyball, Consort School.
- Darian Price – Football, J.C. Charyk Hanna School.
- Nathan Van Lagen – Baseball, Altario School.

According to McKeage, this year’s selection committee had a challenging task to choose between an incredibly talented and deserving group of student athletes.

“These three recipients were selected based on their exceptional athletic ability, academic achievements, and exemplary qualities as positive team members,” he said.

“Each embodies the values of dedication, perseverance, and teamwork that Prairie Land seeks to foster in its students.”

Katie Hadwin is a strong all-around athlete and a pivotal member of the Consort Stingers volleyball, basketball and track & field teams; she is a team leader that understands the importance of culture and relationships. As a Power, she led her volleyball team to the last two

ASAA provincial tournaments in 2023 and 2024.

Nathan Van Lagen is a hard-throwing, ambidextrous pitcher for the Neutral Hills Wranglers (Prairie Land’s baseball academy team) who exemplifies leadership with his team mates during practices and in the midst of a game. Never losing sight that sports should be fun, he also played senior boys volleyball for the Altario boys team that hosted the 2024 ASAA Central Zone tournament.

Darian Price was a three year defensive back for the JCC Hawks football team that played in six straight ASAA provincial finals. Standing 6’4’, he covers the field very quickly and has been one of the team leaders in tackles and interceptions each of his three years. Darian also plays for the Hawks senior boys basketball team and brings the same passion to the hardcourt.

The UNB REDS scholarship students will head to UNB’s Fredericton campus February 23 to 26, where they will experience life as U SPORTS student-

athletes.

During their visit, they will observe competitions, practices and team meetings; meet U SPORTS athletic trainers for guidance on training and preparation for sports beyond high school; and tour the UNB campus and meet with academic advisors to explore university programming.

“We look forward to following the journeys of these outstanding individuals as they continue to excel on and off the field,” says McKeage, adding his praise for the division’s coaches, athletic directors and schools for their support in fostering excellence among student-athletes.

“Congratulations to these amazing young adults but also to our three athletic directors (Rob Kinsman, Jessica Heck and Clint Mohl) and our three principals (Vince Hill, Kevin Van Lagen and Corry Raugust) for creating extracurricular programs embraced by the community that provides an opportunity for all students to excel personally and athletically.”



Consort student, Katie Hadwin is one of this year’s UNB REDS Scholarship winners. Pictured from left to right is Superintendent Cam McKeage, Samantha Rooney (volleyball coach), Consort Principal Vince Hill and Deputy Superintendent Steve Nielsen. See page 3 for information about Price and Van Lagen.

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UNB REDS Scholarship Recipients



Pitcher for the Neutral Hills Wranglers, Altario student Nathan Van Lagen is one of the division's UNB REDS Scholarship winners.



Three year defensive back for the JCC Hawks football team, Darian Price is one of the recipients of the UNB REDS Scholarships.

Get ‘em Outside—Youngstown’s Outdoor Learning Space

By Kelly Lewis

A group of students from Youngstown School went to the village council with the idea of getting a fish pond within walking distance of the school. Fast forward a year and the pond construction details are in the final stages and construction will hopefully begin soon. Safe to say, you never know until you ask.

The former Youngstown Golf Course north of the Special Areas Service Center in Youngstown is the site of the Prairie Land Outdoor Learning Space. After the students got the ball rolling, several of the students and I toured around the site and threw around all kinds of ideas for using the space. More formal and informal conversations came up with even more ideas. It was agreed that a fish pond would be the big draw, but a compass course, 3D archery course, tipis, and a wetland seemed most popular.

Getting kids outdoors is a big deal for me. Having a space dedicated to outdoor learning is a luxury few schools can claim. Plans for the site include a wide array of activities and exploration spaces which will be shared by students from around Prairie Land. The residents of Youngstown, Special Areas and in fact all of Alberta will have the opportunity to access the site for a variety of activities.

The fish pond is the anchor of the site. Initial discussions with our “dirt guy” made it apparent that if we were to have any success with digging a pond we first needed to drill test holes and find a suitable location. Testing showed that the initial ideal location wouldn’t work, but an alternate location proved viable.

The pond will feature open sides and a dock for casting. It will be stocked with rainbow trout, hopefully supplemented by the forthcoming aquaponics system in the Youngstown School greenhouse. Although the pond will be open to all residents and subject to provincial regulations, signage will describe the educational aspect of the pond and catch and release will be encouraged, except for youngsters and first time fishers. Getting the hole in the ground is only part of the process - we need to secure the initial water and develop ways to best capture snow-melt and run off.

The dirt from the pond will be used to build an amphitheater on the southern section of the site. Having a dedicated place outdoors for presentations and gathering people together will help create an air of formality by connecting the outdoors to learning.

Youngstown School, like many schools in Prairie Land, is a NASP school. Archery has provided many students with opportunities to compete and experience the benefits of being a team member.

A 3D archery course is being planned for the site which will simulate a variety of shooting positions and target opportunities. It is possible that if interest permits and the right partnerships can be formed, the archery course could be set up for public use and become a drawing card to archers outside of school.

An enlightening and informative day was spent on-site with Saa’kokoto, an elder with the Kainai tribe of the Blackfoot

confederacy.

He was able to introduce us to a way of looking at the site and better understand how indigenous people would have used this landscape. One of the biggest takeaways was his recommendations regarding tipis, their placement and use.

We are planning for 3 tipis which will provide an excellent location for delivering relevant and meaningful instruction in land based learning.

A unique opportunity connected to the tipis is the process of harvesting the poles which will require a foray into Castle Mountain wilderness. The opportunities for building top-notch, land based learning experiences for our students is going to be fantastic.

One of the first grant proposals was for a fitness and interpretive trail. The 2.3km trail will skirt the top two-thirds of the site and give users the opportunity to not only enjoy the walk, but to participate in targeted physical activities and learn about the landscape, flora and fauna of the site.

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The plan for Youngstown’s Outdoor Learning Space.

Youngstown Outdoor Project to Benefit Community

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Special Areas has agreed to power mulch the trail and exercise stations with a seriously cool piece of machinery which will be augmented with other surface material if required.

Even if the grant for the equipment doesn't come through, the trail will be established and completed over an extended time frame.

Ms. Eddleston from Youngstown School is facilitating a partnership with a Piikani tribe school that is currently raising plants with traditional indigenous value.

Our hope is that we are going to be able to build a partnership with them to help create a garden of valuable, indigenous plants and in return, we will work with them to support some aspect of their programming. Part

of the interpretive angle of the fitness trail will be introducing native plants and their uses and we hope the plants from this partnership

fa, clover and thistle which are not native to the area.

Recent conversations with participants and presenters at the Grassland Reclamation

bridge regarding research, and with Lethbridge Polytechnic and Lakeland College to develop dual credit programming with a component taking place on the Outdoor Learning Space.

To date, much of the work done on the site has been research as this has never been done before.

There are a lot of moving parts, a great deal of potential and many possible partnerships which can be tapped into.

The jigsaw of components that the project is won't be completed this school year or even next, but as pieces are established, connections made, plants begin to grow and the weather cooperates, we will begin to see how we can get our students outside and create new and wonderful learning experiences.

"Getting kids outdoors is a big deal for me."

Kelly Lewis,
CTF / CTS instructor at Youngstown School.

can be represented on our site.

A local biologist toured the site and suggested the best way to bring native wildlife back to the site is to return it to native prairie.

The cover is currently smooth brome, crested wheat grass and some alfalfa,

Forum and planned conversations with Special Areas and Chinook Applied Research Association will help formulate a plan for reclaiming all - or part - of the site.

Investigation is also taking place in hopes of building research site possibilities with the University of Leth-

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