

Inspiring students to pursue skilled trades and technologies as a career pathway



Skilled trades and technologies play a crucial role in Alberta's economy. Tradespeople construct the shelters where we work and live, build the roads we travel, prepare the food we enjoy, and provide the talent required to grow and sustain our economy. Tradespeople earn while they learn, benefit from well-paid, secure jobs, and are in demand across the province. Fueling their success and the province's prosperity, many tradespeople specialize in their field, move into leadership roles, start their own business, or transition to teaching careers.

The pathway to skilled trades and technologies is rigorous. Attainment of a certificate requires mental acuity, discipline, dedication, and a strong work ethic. Upon leaving the K-12 system, students demonstrate the academic and skilled readiness to enter their chosen field. Successful students also possess critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, creativity, and digital/information literacy skills.

Although a ticket to a challenging and rewarding career, apprenticeships for skilled trades and technologies have declined in recent years. Several studies point to students' limited exposure and understanding of apprenticeship education and labour market opportunities. Others cite inequities in terms of student access to programming and the lack of facilities. The most critical issue, however, relates to the value of the profession. Many research studies outlined that students

say teachers, parents, grandparents, friends, peers, and society discouraged students from pursuing skilled trades careers - especially new Canadians, whose families moved to Canada to provide their children with more opportunities to pursue. This builds upon the perception that the K-12 system only prepares students for a single pathway – university.

Anticipating a significant number of tradespersons will retire by 2028, Alberta faces a current and future shortage of skilled professionals. Now is the time for policymakers, educators, partners, and employers to demonstrate their value of skilled trades and technologies by making a commitment to working together to inspire today's youth to pursue these rewarding occupations.

Through a grant provided by Alberta Education, the College of Alberta School Superintendents established the Trades, Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Committee (TAVE) to design a strategic framework that illustrates how stakeholder groups could come together to close the employment gap, while maximizing efficiencies and building synergies among partnering organizations. Made up of representatives from Alberta's education ministries, school authorities, post-secondary institutions, skilled trades partner organizations, and employers, TAVE hopes the framework lays the foundation in building students' interest, awareness, and participation in skilled trades and technologies.

Trades, Apprenticeship, & Vocational Education (TAVE) Committee Members

CASS Co-Chairs

Colleen Symyrozum-Watt & Jason Kupery

CASS Partners

Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training - Ward Mewhort (resource)
 Alberta Education - Carla Johnson (resource)
 Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia - Patrick Bohnet
 Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta - Ray Battocchio
 CAREERS: The Next Generation - Andy Neigel
 Earls - Riley Cartier
 Olds College - Jackie Taylor
 Alta Pro Electric Ltd. - Jeanette Debruin & Dale Valle
 Rupertsland Institute Métis Centre of Excellence - Dylan Turner & Krista Leddy
 Skills Canada, Alberta - Chris Browton
 SAIT - Rozlynn Wick
 Tsuu'ina Board of Education - Nedine Simeon
 Women Building Futures - Jess Thomson

CASS Representatives

Zone 1 - Roger Lauck & Karen Smith
 Zone 2/3 - Keith Gamblin & Natasha MacArthur-Poole
 Zone 4 - Sean Loughheed & Ryan Sawula
 Zone 5 - Sandy McDuffe & Jodi Peat
 Zone 6 - Carmen Larsen
 Francophone - Stéphan De Loof
 Charter Schools - Guy Tétrault
 Communication Consultant - Angela Spanier

SKILLED TRADES, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Through shared responsibility and accountability, Alberta's government, school authorities, post-secondary institutions, partner organizations, and employers enable students to **EXPLORE**, **ENGAGE**, and **EXPERIENCE** skilled trades and technologies.

EDUCATORS

K - 12:

Strong Curricular Connections & Bridging Experiences

Build curricular connections and provide authentic learning experiences, garnering support of parents in guiding students along an informed career pathway that ensures their academic and skilled readiness.

Post-Secondary: Informed Transitions & Student Success

Equip students to succeed through rigorous academic studies and skills training opportunities, bridging their transition from high school to post-secondary and the workplace.

PARTNERS

Coordinated Promotion, Exposure & Placement

Provide accurate, informative, and robust tools and resources for students to experience the workplace and connect with employers.

EMPLOYERS

Accessible & Inclusive Workplace Experiences

Create networks to identify and facilitate safe, inclusive, high-quality learning opportunities for students to explore and experience the workplace.

POLICYMAKERS

System-Wide Scalability

Prioritize skilled trades and technologies programming for students to inform policies and funding that enable equitable, system-wide scalability of learning opportunities.

