



Media Release

For Immediate Release

Augmented Reality Sets High School Students up for Success

Charles Spencer High School

March 21, 2023 – The welding lab at Charles Spencer High School looks and sounds a lot different. There are not as many sparks, yet more students are excelling at welding. It's all thanks to augmented reality (AR) simulators.

Each AR set consists of a wireless board and welding wand, and associated software that has a catalogue of preloaded settings. Students can choose their project and work on a touchscreen device or a face mask with a built-in screen.

"I like how I can make mistakes and know it's OK. The equipment gives me the confidence to try hard techniques. I am learning a lot," said Grade 10 student, Noah.

"This new technology is saving us time in the classroom, and money on materials - plus students are gaining experience much faster than without the AR equipment," explained Career and Technology Studies (CTS) teacher, Joe LaValley.



"Many students new to fabrication are intimidated by the sparks and noise that accompany the work," he said. "The simulators provide a realistic and engaging way to build confidence before attempting live GMAW (MIG) welding in our lab."

When asked how he liked working with the simulator, Ethan, a grade 10 student, paused his session and replied, "it's great – I like that I can restart whenever I need," then turned back to completing his assignment.



An interesting feature of the equipment is the ability to turn on and off the assisted learning guidance. The AR's programming allows students to get instant feedback on how they are doing and how to correct their work. When it comes to exam time, the assistance is turned off.



"Working with our community partners, we know individuals with fabrication skills remain in high demand in the Grande Prairie area," stated Chris Dextrase, Principal of Charles Spencer High School.

"I know our teachers are happy to be able to provide students with a new way to challenge their skills and grow their knowledge. Ultimately, these new experiences could be the beginning steps into a rewarding career."

The school purchased five AR simulators late last year through a partnership with the Grande Prairie Public School Division Education Foundation.

"Our Board was pleased to receive this funding application and immediately knew it would help a lot of students in the short term while having a long-lasting impact on the quality of the student experience," explained Shaundra Siebert, Executive Director of the Foundation. The Foundation provided the requested amount with funds from the annual School Grant Program.



More Information

- For more information about Career and Technology Studies (CTS) programs at Charles Spencer High School, call the main office at 780-513-3200.
- GMAW stands for Gas Metal Arc Welding, also known as MIG or metal inter gas welding.
- GPPSD has many educational opportunities for students to gain skills and knowledge in trades. The Grande Prairie Composite High School offers an Apprenticeship Program. The Bridge Network Outreach School, Charles Spencer High School, and Grande Prairie Composite High School offer the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Learn more: www.gppsd.ab.ca/apprenticeship
- GPPSD's new student registration is open for the 2023-2024 school year. Register online: www.gppsd.ab.ca/registration
- Donations can be made through the Grande Prairie Public School Division's Education Foundation to support local public education and promote student excellence. To get started, email edfoundation@gppsd.ab.ca.

About the Grande Prairie Public School Division Education Foundation

The GPPSD Education Foundation was started in 1991 to enhance educational opportunities for students in the Grande Prairie Public School Division. It was designed to complement basic education services in the city's public schools. Foundation members work towards providing resources in areas that are not funded through government allocations to school boards. The Board of Directors, together with the many contributors have been able to enhance the educational experience for students.

Learn more at www.gppsd.ab.ca/division. Follow GPPSDEdFoundation on Facebook.



About the Grande Prairie Public School Division (GPPSD):

The Grande Prairie Public School Division is a learning community in the city of Grande Prairie responsible for the education of over 8,500 students (Pre-Kindergarten to grade 12) in 18 schools. The Grande Prairie Public School Division is proud to provide a variety of Preschool, French Immersion, Montessori, Christian Education, sports-focused and International Baccalaureate Programs serving students and families of the Grande Prairie community. GPPSD believes in creating a nurturing environment where 'every student succeeds.'



To learn more, visit www.gppsd.ab.ca and follow GPPSD2357 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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