



71 Exhibitors | 13 School Divisions | 35 Schools | 21 Communities |  
3900 high school students

750 RDP students and community members from 5-8pm

## 2023 Red Deer Polytechnic Education and Career Expo

The 1st Annual Education and Career Expo Red Deer Polytechnic (RDP) was held on Thursday, April 27th, 2023, from 9am to 8pm. The event saw future students, current students, and community members to provide an educational and immersive experience where they can connect with exhibitors, employers, and teachers.

In 2023 Red Deer Polytechnic shifted from hosting the event on behalf of CAREERS to coordinating the Education and Career Expo with the support of an external steering committee including representatives from CAREERS, five school divisions, as well as local organizations and businesses.

The Education and Career Expo would not have been possible without support from funders, contributors, and volunteers. Thank you to the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, City of Red Deer and CAREERS; as well as our volunteers from RDP, Notre Dame High School, Lindsay Thurber High School and Hunting Hills High School

When asked, "Compared to other career fairs and post-secondary open houses you have attended, please rate your experience at the RDP Education and Career Expo", 1 being the worst and 5 being the best\*:

**Students** rated their experience a **4**

**Administrators and teachers** rated their experience a **4**

**Exhibitors** rated their experience a **3.8**

**Community** rated their experience a **3.4**

*\*The median across all surveyed groups was 4*



## Highlights

### Exhibitors

*"It was a great day! It was well organized and easy to be an exhibitor... (thank you)! Had many great conversations with students and community members."*

- Lots of engagement and great connections with students
- Variety of organizations
- Well organized for exhibitors
- Lots of attendance with a good flow

### Students

- Many different options to learn about careers in an in-depth way
- Friendly and engaging, interactive booths, hand-on experiences.

### Administrators and Teachers

- Ability to explore the RDP Campus
- Hands-on opportunities for students
- RDP Staff were welcoming and helpful

### Community

- Friendliness of RDP and opportunity to speak with instructors
- Program presentations and engaging booths

*"I found that there were a lot of different places to go to learn about careers I might want to pursue. I really enjoyed all the lovely people who helped teach me more about careers."*

## Challenges

### Exhibitors

- Evening felt slower paced even though the audience was more relevant to some employers
- Very long day

### Students

- Difficult to find the way around, better wayfinding needed, clearer maps
- Needed more time to experience it all
- Difficult to talk to certain booths due to crowdedness, overwhelming
- More pre-preparation from teachers to students

### Administrators and Teachers

- Navigation was challenging
- Communication from administrators beforehand
- Too crowded

### Community

- Navigation and wayfinding
- More diverse employers

## Recommendations

1. Improve signage, wayfinding, and volunteer knowledge of the event locations.
2. Re-evaluate the timing and structure of the event to better meet the variety of needs of the intended audience.
3. Provide hot lunch for exhibitors as well as food and beverage stations in exhibitor areas for increased ease of access.
4. Encourage increased communications between school administrators, teachers, and students to facilitate preparedness.
5. Improve set-up and take down processes for exhibitors. For example, provide closer parking and volunteer assistances for unloading and set-up; allow take-down to happen the day following the event.