

Army reserves partner with Regina schools

By Emma Graney, The Leader-Post September 3, 2014

Come February, Regina high school students will be able to earn two credits by signing up with the army reserves.

In a Canadian first, one of those credits is a core requirement for graduation, the other counts as an elective.

Col. Ross Ermel was at both the Regina public and separate school board meetings on Tuesday night, and explained the program as a way for students to "learn valuable life and career skills."

A similar co-operative program runs successfully in Ontario, but the Saskatchewan model includes the key element of a core credit in Canadian Studies 30.

Ermel said he first raised the subject of an army co-op program in Saskatchewan to Premier Brad Wall, when Ermel took over command of the 38th Canadian Brigade Group.

The idea, he said, is a way to "revitalize the reserves" in the Queen City.

Talks began with the Ministry of Education, and on Tuesday night both the Regina Catholic and public school board trustees embraced the plan.

"What a great opportunity for our students," Catholic division trustee Rob Bresciani told the meeting. "I wish we'd had something like this when I was in school."

That sentiment was echoed at the public division a couple of hours later, with trustee Kathleen O'Reilly noting it could encourage some students to stay in school. Greg Enion is the deputy director of student achievement at Regina public, and said the co-op program melds with the division's goals.

"One of the things we're trying to do is make high school ... a place to provide as many career pathways and opportunities as we can, and provide new levels of engagement for our students," he said.

"There are hundreds of different career opportunities that can come from something like this, so that really hit home for us."

The biggest challenge now, Ermel said, is promoting the program to students. "This first semester is key to get the word out there, make sure counsellors know about it, kids know about it, and teachers see it for the good it is," he said.

Applications for the program open Oct. 14.

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Army co-op program

Two credits: one core, one elective

Students will be paid \$90/day (\$2,000 total)

40 places in the program

Possibility of paid summer training

Students must have completed Grade 10

Students must pass security, aptitude, medical

Estimated student/teacher ratio is 6:1

Classes will be taught at the Regina Armories in the afternoon

Students are under no obligation to remain in the reserves

Applications open Oct. 14, course begins Feb. 17, 2015.

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