

CAREER PORTFOLIO NIGHT Glenmary School Peace River, Alberta, Canada

“**M**y son now has a better idea of what he needs to do to reach his goal. It was interesting and helpful to both students and parents. I learned how important it is to keep talking to my son about his future career.” This is the way a parent described Career Portfolio Night, an event that takes place in January and June of each school year at Glenmary High School. On Career Portfolio Night, eleventh-grade students in the compulsory Career and Life Management Course (CALM) showcase for their families a portfolio that describes a specific career path. In making career portfolios, students research an interesting career choice and talk with a professional in that field to get feedback and first-hand knowledge of the job.

The goals of this practice are to showcase students’ completed portfolios, give students an opportunity to talk with someone who is actually engaged in the career they have chosen, and to strengthen the partnership between students, parents, community members, and counselors involved in career choices. Students at Glenmary have been completing portfolios for a number of years. However, students did not see the value of completing a portfolio, and parents did not have the opportunity to see what their student was doing. Career Portfolio Night gives students something to work toward and allows

parents to see the work their child has done. Putting each student in contact with someone who is presently working in his/her chosen career adds another dimension to the career education program.

Students complete their portfolios during ten to twelve CALM class sessions. Then, teachers prepare information for the community members, and give this information to career counselors, who match a community/business member to each student. The Action Team for Partnerships calls parents to invite them to Career Portfolio Night.

The evening of the event, students display their portfolios in the courtyard. When community members arrive, they are given assessment sheets and expectations for the evening. Community members then speak to students and parents, evaluate each portfolio, and share the evaluation with the student. Parents also view the portfolios.

Career Portfolio Night has great benefits for students. Students build contacts for future employment, dialogue with someone actively involved in a career of interest, identify courses that will build the skills required for certain jobs, and connect their skills and talents with the jobs that use those abilities.

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