

Edwin Parr Award nominee continues to learn from her former high school teacher

For Immediate Release, April 10, 2019: Bailey Sisson's first year of teaching at École Olds High School has a familiar feel to it, as she is working alongside her own former teacher!

Bailey grew up in the Chinook's Edge school community of Innisfail, which is where she first met Kent Lorenz when he taught high school math. He is now the Vice Principal of Olds High and, as Bailey's first-year teaching responsibility has included several academic math and science courses, it has been a perfect fit to turn to her own former teacher for advice every now and again.

"This sense of community is what I love about working in a rural school division," said Bailey. "I was so excited to be able to start my teaching career at home in Chinook's Edge. I love teaching and I really love science, so having students who are also motivated in science is incredibly rewarding. I am working with students who are prepared to work at a very high level. What a great first year!"

Great first year, indeed! Bailey Sisson's Biology 30 students achieved the highest Diploma Exam marks in the school's history. It is her high expectations, keen interest in the curriculum and natural ability to motivate students which resulted in Bailey Sisson being named as the Chinook's Edge Edwin Parr Award nominee. The Alberta School Boards' Association 'Edwin Parr Award' recognizes teachers who are new to the profession who show significant promise in their first year.

"It was the students who were so very impressive. They worked hard and they were so excited by their own achievements," said Bailey. "It has been a pleasant challenge to keep them motivated at the high level that they, themselves, want to engage in. It has been the basis of a strong relationship with them – and that has been the force for all the success. They trust that I'm organized and know my stuff, but they also know we can have some fun in the classroom.

"Teaching is such a huge balancing act – looking after all the demands and providing students with everything they need. I am so grateful to be spending my first year with students who are so engaged! It has been so fantastic seeing them succeeding, and I've had so much help and support right in the school."

As part of the Chinook's Edge mentorship program, Bailey was matched with a seasoned science teacher at Olds High. She has also had access to PD sessions and mentorship gatherings with Division Office staff and fellow beginning teachers from across the division.

"Bailey has amazing planning and organizational skills," said Principal Tom Christensen. "She anticipates every possible scenario before it happens in her classroom, and her students feel confident following her lead. They are really impressed with how prepared she is. She also uses technology very well, and a lot of interactive learning is taking place between her and the entire class. Her teaching style is really effective."

The Edwin Parr Award winner from Zone 4 will be announced at a special event on May 27.