



Fulford Harbour Consulting, Ltd.

414 Isabella Point Road

Salt Spring Island

British Columbia, V8K 1V9

www.fulfordharbour.ca

An Examination of Barriers to Student Enrolment in ACE IT & SSA

Prepared for the

Industry Training Authority

April 2007

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Interview Results.....	1
Recommendations	3
Introduction	5
Methodology	5
Interview Results	6
Question 1 - How Long?	6
Question 2 - How Many Students?	7
Questions 3 & 4 - Awareness.....	8
Question 5 - Current & Future Employment Opportunities.....	8
Question 6 - Working Overall	9
Question 7 - Barriers Identified	10
Question 8 – Roles	14
Question 9 - Best Things About the Programs.....	20
Question 10 – Future Enrolment Levels.....	21
Questions 11 & 12 - Industry Advisory Group/Action Plan	22
Other Comments.....	23
Conclusions/Observations	26
Noteworthy Suggestions from Participants	29
Distance Learning	29
Funding	29
Recommendations	30
Actions that can be undertaken over the short term:.....	30
Actions for the longer term:	34
Appendices	37
Appendix A – Summary of Stakeholder Feedback.....	37
Appendix B – List of Contacts and Respondents	39
Appendix C – Interview Questions	41
Appendix D – Interview Comments Received	44

Executive Summary

Fulford Harbour Consulting (FHC) was contracted by the Industry Training Authority to undertake an evaluation of the barriers to student enrolment in the ACE IT and SSA programs. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine what the barriers are and the roles that various stakeholders could play in removing them.

Over the period of March and April 2007 FHC conducted interviews with 72 ACE IT and SSA coordinators at the school and district levels to get feedback on the ACE IT program.

Interview Results

Province-wide School and School District representatives who are directly responsible for coordinating, promoting and administering the ACE IT and/or SSA programs were asked a series of structured interview questions to gather feedback on barriers to enrolment in ACE IT and SSA. The following is a summary of the interview results gathered.

Questions were divided into sections to:

1. Understand the nature of the interviewee's role. i.e. "Are you the coordinator for ACE IT, SSA or Both?" 81.9% responded they are both.
2. Examine the program awareness levels of students and employers. i.e. "How would you rate student awareness of SSA and ACE IT?" where 1= "low" and 5 = "very high". The average rating of all responses was an average 3 out of 5.
3. Examine the success levels of their programs and the reasons they felt their programs were or were not successful. i.e. "How well do you feel your ACE IT/SSA programs are working overall? Why?" The average response for ACE IT was 3.2, with 3.4 for SSA.

A typical '3' answer stated: "Because of the financial constraints of our small district, there is no staff time allotted to these programs. It is difficult to do a 'bang-up' job of everything on top of existing duties and priorities." While a typical '5' answer stated: "We were at zero two years ago – the District took the leadership position and appointed a coordinator which enabled them to develop the community links."

4. Examine the barriers for further enrolment growth. i.e. "Do you feel there are barriers and please describe them."

"These programs are changing the face of education delivery at SS and college levels, providing youth with incredible opportunities to jumpstart their careers. Really engaging students that would otherwise drop out or fail."

Program Coordinator

Participants identified 16 key barriers to enrolment. The top five being Funding, the School System, Post Secondary Institutions, Employers and the Economy, and Local Challenges within the local school system, particularly for rural areas.

5. Examine the roles of stakeholder groups – Students/Parents, Schools/School Districts, Employers, Post Secondary Institutions, the Ministry of Education and the ITA - in removing those barriers. Key roles identified included:
 - Students/Parents – educate themselves about trades and lose any bias toward trades.
 - Schools/School Districts– Provide more/targeted funding for trades resources.
 - Employers – Be willing to accept students.
 - Post Secondary Institutions – Work with schools and the community.
 - Ministry of Education – Provide funding for trades resources and equipment.
 - Teachers – Lose the academic bias and become aware of the opportunities for trades.
 - Industry Training Authority – Further streamline the amount of paperwork required for the programs.
6. What is best about the ACE IT and SSA programs. Overwhelmingly respondents couldn't say enough about how enthusiastic they and the kids are about the programs, and stated that the programs provided great opportunities for kids to;
 - get a head start on a career, especially with the dual credits and the scholarships, and
 - to stay in school, to feel positive about themselves, and in many cases turn their lives around.
7. Examine advisory support and planning in the Districts. i.e. *"Does your District have an Industry Advisory Group? An Industry Training Action Plan?"* Only 37.5% of Districts reported they had an Advisory Group, and only 20.8% reported having an action plan. Several asked "what's that?"

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the feedback from the interviewees were divided into those that can be addressed over the short term and those that will require more time to complete:

Short term recommendations:

- Creation of one-time grants for start-up or expansion
- Looking at ways to ensure adequate long term funding for resources, equipment and facilities.
- Continuing to streamline administrative paperwork.
- Working together to ensure strong partnerships with colleges
- Undertaking joint/regional initiatives, fostering partnerships with other stakeholders
- Developing an on-line Handbook for ACE IT, including sharing successes and resource tools.
- Investigating alternative technical training partners
- Encouraging 'girls in trades'
- Facilitating an effective tracking system
- Expanding promotional activities
- Setting performance targets for School Districts
- Reviewing scholarship criteria for SSA
- Devoting resources to program coordination
- School Districts establishing Industry Advisory Committees and Plans if they don't have them
- Educating educators about trades programs and qualifications

Longer term recommendations:

- Ensuring the availability of appropriate math and technical English courses.

- Supporting the coordination of the ACE IT and SSA programs with targeted funding for resources, equipment and facilities.
- Streamlining the certification process for trades teachers and thereby increasing the supply of certified teachers
- Developing and delivering a strategy for supporting rural schools
- Developing a long term province-wide Industry Training Action Plan/Guide
- Developing a long term Trades Marketing Plan

Introduction

Fulford Harbour Consulting (FHC) was contracted by the Industry Training Authority to undertake an examination of the barriers to student enrolment in the ACE IT and SSA programs. The purpose of the review was twofold:

1. To gaining an understanding of the existing barriers that stakeholders within the school system – district and school level program coordinators/administrators – encounter as they setup and manage their programs, and
2. To look at ways that the identified barriers could be removed, and how stakeholders throughout the process – Students/Parents, Schools/School Districts, Employers, Post Secondary Institutions, the Ministry of Education and the ITA - could play a role to help remove those barriers.

Methodology

On behalf of the ITA, Fulford Harbour Consulting undertook to contact the ACE IT & SSA coordinators at the district and school level in each School District in the province to examine barriers to student enrolment in the ACE IT and SSA programs. A total of 92 people representing 59 public School Districts and 5 independent secondary schools were identified as contacts.

All participants were first contacted by email and received a copy of the interview questionnaire. All were then contacted by telephone at least once. In total, 72 interview questionnaires were completed, representing 53 public School Districts and four independent secondary schools. A list of all contacts, and which of them responded/did not respond is attached as Appendix A, and the Questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

The respondents represent a fair cross section of the province and come from virtually every geographical area and include small isolated communities, such as the Queen Charlotte Islands, and large urban centres, such as Victoria and Vancouver.

While conducting the interviews we also heard a number of positive comments from the coordinators about the work that the ITA has been doing to develop and support these programs such as “great job” and “keep up the good work”.

The following report offers the summary of these interviews and recommendations based on the feedback from these stakeholders.

***Fabulous
what they're
doing! Clone
Jesse! Get
her help -
she does an
outstanding
job!***

*District
Coordinator*

Interview Results

Representatives provided feedback through structured telephone interviews or by completing their own questionnaire and returning it to FHC by fax or email over the period of March and April 2007. Following is a summary of the results of these interviews by question:

Responsibility

Before launching into the formal interview questions, respondents were asked if they were the coordinator for ACE IT, SSA or both, and if there were additional coordinators for the programs.

81.9% of respondents stated that they were the coordinator for both, 6.9% looked after SSA only, and 11.1% looked after ACE IT.

Most noted that the role was only one of many hats they wore, and that often the job was done 'off the side of their desk'. Some also looked after all career counselling, while others also carried teaching and administrative duties.

Very few districts had a dedicated district coordinator, although 62.5% of respondents noted that they were not the only person in the district involved with the day-to-day administration and running of the programs. Many had colleagues in other schools in their district who fulfilled the same role, or career counsellors who helped with the program, and sometimes an administrative person who helped part time with the paperwork.

Question 1 - How Long?

"How Long have you been coordinating the ACE IT/SSA Program in your district?" and "How Long has your district had a coordinator?"

The average length of time that respondents had been coordinating the programs was 4.3 years. However, most have actually been coordinating ACE IT since its inception. Twelve were new to the roles this year, and 19 (or 26.4%) of them have been coordinating trade programs for more than 5 years.

The amount of time School Districts have had someone on a District level overseeing the programs varied from never (just school level coordinators) at 5.6% of respondents, to 43.1% having had someone in place for over 5 years. 8.3% of Districts have had someone in place for only a year or less. The average was 6.3 years. Again, almost all reported that overseeing trades programs was not their only role.

82% are Coordinators for both ACE IT & SSA

Few Districts have dedicated coordinators

Average 4.3 yrs.

26.4% more than 5 yrs.

Typical comments included:

"Each secondary school has a teacher and/or work experience coordinator who works with me (Director of Secondary Instruction) and our team to develop programs, enrol students and meet required ACE-IT / SSA deadlines. The teachers typically have 0.25 of their time allocated to all work experience issues. The coordinators are support staff positions responsible for all work experience placements in the Graduation Program. I have been doing this since May of 2005 when I was appointed Director of Secondary Instruction. Prior to this we had no coordinator and no ACE-IT programs. SSA was done through each Secondary school's work experience office."

" There is no formal coordinator for our district. The high school Principal does SSA along with other duties, the Acting Superintendent does ACE IT and there is a clerical person at each school for ACE IT (and other duties) and there are career facilitators."

Question 2 - How Many Students?

How many students do you currently have enrolled in your ACE IT / SSA programs? Has this number been increasing, decreasing, staying the same?

Our respondent's students totalled up to 2,724 enrolled in ACE IT programs, with a further 995 enrolled in SSA, for an overall total of approximately 3,719 students (many guessed at their numbers) in the schools represented by the survey. (Numbers for the other 6 Districts and one independent school are unknown.)

It is impossible to provide a school average for the number of students per school as some schools do not yet have ACE IT or are just starting it up (8 of them or 11.1%), are in a rural location with very low numbers, or have well-established programs in an urban setting with numerous students. All of which skew any sort of average. The District with the highest enrolment was Surrey with a combined total of approximately 350 students.

Although several schools are faced with the challenge of getting their programs going and/or with declining enrolments 68.1% reported that their numbers are on the increase. 26.4% were staying the same and only 5.6% of respondents are seeing a decrease.

***2,724 ACE IT
995 SSA
3,719 TOTAL***

***(in 53 SDs &
4 independent
schools
contacted)***

***68.1% have
numbers on
the increase.***

Typical comments included:

From an established District: *"Currently the Nanaimo/Ladysmith Career Technical Centre has 130 students enrolled in 12 different post-secondary trades and/or technical programs. Of these, 68 were identified as qualifying for ACE IT funding. This number has been increasing as the CTC focuses on those trades eligible for subsidized funding through the ITA's ACE IT initiative. Fall 2007 will see approximately 90+/- students who take part in our CTC programs qualifying for ACE IT funding."*

From a District starting their programs: *"SSA – 0 this year, but I have gone to every planning 10 class and have promoted the SSA, ACE IT and Work Experience 12 both last year and this year. Last year, we had 3 students in SSA. In 2007 we will have 16-18 students in ACE IT which is increased from 0 students."*

Questions 3 & 4 - Awareness

***How would rate employer awareness of SSA & ACE IT?
How would rate student awareness of SSA and ACE IT?***

For both questions, respondents were asked to rate awareness on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= "low" and 5 = "very high".

Employer awareness of SSA and ACE IT averaged out at 2.7. While most respondents did not qualify their rating, typically those that did indicated that once employers were aware of the SSA program they were quite responsive, however, there was a lot of work involved in explaining the program to them. They also noted that getting the word out and making community/employer connections was a time intensive process and they often did not have the necessary time needed.

***Average
industry
awareness
2.7***

Many respondents felt they could not rate student awareness of ACE IT and SSA awareness together, therefore responses were split to reflect the awareness of each separately. Most respondents believed that students were aware of the programs, and that the more they were able to promote them to the students and parents the higher their awareness became. Average awareness for ACE IT was 3.0, and for SSA 3.2.

***Average
student
awareness
3.0/3.2***

Question 5 - Current & Future Employment Opportunities

How would you rate available and future opportunities for ACE IT and SSA work placements in your community?

Respondents were asked to rate opportunities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= "very poor" and 5 = "very good".

With a few exceptions in areas of limited economic means, most people were quite optimistic about future opportunities for students, especially as the programs become more well known, resulting in an average rating of 3.8.

Question 6 - Working Overall

How well do you feel that your ACE IT / SSA programs are working overall and why?

Respondents were asked to rate the programs on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = "very poorly" 3 = "adequately" and 5 = "very well".

An enthusiastic group of 48.7% of respondents felt that overall their programs are fairly successful and are currently working in the range of 3 or 4 out of 5, while 16.7% feel that their program is really successful and is already at a five! Of the respondents, several split their responses to reflect more or less success in one program, and several (10.3%) couldn't yet rate their success as they are either in the start up stage with no programs yet, or have not been able to get off the ground at all. The overall breakdown is as follows:

Program Rating	
4 to 4.5 (well)	25.6%
3 to 3.5 (adequately)	23.1%
5 (very well)	16.7%
2 to 2.5 (poor)	15.4%
0 - couldn't rate	10.3%
1 to 1.5 (very poorly)	9.0%

***Over 66%
feel programs
are a success***

"1 – 1.5" 9% of respondents

Answers in the "1" range suggested reasons such as *"Union difficulties have made it difficult to start."* and *"There is no money in it (SSA) for the school, therefore it is difficult to persuade Principals to promote it."*

"2 – 2.5" 15.4% of respondents

A typical "2" responded *"a) We need a driver at each school – no incentive yet to do so – too much admin work. b) District hasn't put someone on it to focus on it and keep people informed – i.e. he (current person) has 5 portfolios and therefore is very time-stretched."* and *"The rules to operate by shift. The continual information flow is overwhelming and difficult to keep track of. Think we're only doing an average job at present. Need a guide*

***"2.5 – Too
much to do,
with too little
resources"***

School Coordinator

outlining what to do/how to best run the program – we have no time to find out ourselves."

"3 – 3.5" 23.1% of respondents

Threes start to get a bit more positive with remarks like *"We have two successful programs in operation and third in the process of being developed. However, over the past 4 years, our programs have had to be redesigned 4 times to meet emerging Ministry and ITA funding policies and developing relations with our local college. We need a period of consistency and stability to consolidate programs and student/parent/employer awareness and confidence."* However, threes further express frustration that they are not where they'd like to be as reflected in other comments such as *"Not having enough teacher time to get out and promote the program. SSA people used to get out and check students, that function has been downloaded to schools – now no funding and no time for schools to do it."*

"4 – 4.5" 25.6% of respondents

Four's attribute their success to such things as *"... having a new dedicated SSA Coordinator and having websites for SSA and for Trading UP – we now have a consistency of messaging and easy access to the necessary paperwork for students. The School Board and Trustees have supported the programs and we have at least 1 career person at each school and hope to have 1.5 by next year, and we have a career centre assistant at each centre who is trained to help with career training and transitioning. Success rates have also bred more success."*

"5" 16.7% of respondents

Having a dedicated coordinator has also played a significant role in the success of several of the five's. *"We have dedicated personnel on the District and school level and can quickly deal with issues, and employers are taking repeat kids."* Also emphasised by the fives were the successful creation and importance of their community and post secondary links, and their marketing and industry links.

Question 7 - Barriers Identified

Do you feel there are any barriers to more students entering/staying in the ACE IT or SSA programs? If yes, please describe.

Over 93% of respondents felt that there were significant barriers to growing their programs and to having more students entering

4- "Awareness on the part of students, parents and employers is steadily increasing. Our partnership with the College is developing in a positive direction."

District Coordinator

and staying in ACE IT and SSA, although they were positive that many barriers could be overcome. Identified as the number one barrier at 36.1% was funding, both for resources and facilities. It should be noted though that when answering the next question about roles in removing barriers over 50% thought that solving the problem of funding issues was important.

Tied in second place at 29.2% are issues within the provincial school system in general and issues with post secondary institutions. In fourth place are employers and the economy at 27.8%, and challenges within the local school system at 23.6% ranks in fifth place.

Barriers identified are:

#	BARRIERS	%
1	Funding	36.1%
2	School System - General	29.2%
3	Post Secondary Institutions	29.2%
4	Employers	27.8%
5	School System - Local Challenges	23.6%
6	Lack of Trades Awareness/Communications	19.4%
7	Transportation/Distance	18.1%
8	Employers - Local/Rural Challenges	16.7%
9	Parental/Societal/Educator Bias	15.3%
10	School System - Staff Time	15.3%
11	School System - Instructors	16.7%
12	ITA	11.1%
13	School System - Curriculum	11.1%
14	School System - School Scheduling	9.7%
15	School system - Facilities	8.3%
16	School system - Standards/Screening	4.2%
17	Other	4.2%

Following is an overview of the top 10 barriers identified.

Funding

Funding, the number one issue, has several facets. These include:

- The lack of funds for full, or even part-time, dedicated staff for coordination, promotion and administration of the ACE IT and SSA programs. This issue also links to Barrier #10 – Lack of Staff Time.
- The lack of funds to upgrade facilities, especially for the start up of new programs. For example, to start a hairdressing program requires a facility that has additional

plumbing and electricity, as well as special fixtures. Available grants do not cover the costs.

- The need for funds to provide incentives to employers to hire students, especially for the mom and pop shops who are struggling to pay themselves. It would also appear that the discontinuation of the summer works program has had a noteworthy impact, especially in rural areas where there is a general lack of employment opportunity in the first place and what there is, is often seasonal.
- Schools feel they are not being properly compensated for each student and are therefore running programs, if they can run them, at a loss. Money that previously stayed in the school, is now split (unevenly many thought) with the colleges.

School System

While the school system in general ranked as number two, from the 85 comments received in this area we in fact identified 8 types of barriers within the system. Barriers in the general category included issues such as the lack of support for trades programs in general; the lack of a full-time school or district coordinator; the small class sizes which make it hard justify the programs; colleagues in other subject areas being unaware of the requirements for and opportunities within trades professions; and a perceived academic bias throughout the school system and through it a lack of support for the approximately 80% of students who will not be going to university – a comment heard over and over throughout the interview process.

Other school system barriers include local challenges such as small numbers of students, and the lack of employers and post secondary partners; lack of staff time to promote and run the programs; instructor shortages and barriers to their qualifications; curriculum challenges including the lack of trades math and English; non-semestered scheduling that conflicts with the college semester system; facility shortcomings; and lack of programs standards and screening.

The School System barriers break down as follows.

School System – General	25.9%
School System - Local Challenges	20.0%
School System – Instructors	12.9%
School System - Staff Time	12.9%
School System – Curriculum	9.4%
School System - School Scheduling	8.2%

"There is difficulty finding post secondary partnerships in a small town, also partners don't seem keen. We need to find a way to do more conciliatory work with them - they feel threatened and are unsure that the kids are ready."

School Coordinator

School System – Facilities	7.1%
School System - Standards/Screening	3.5%

Post Secondary Institutions

While some areas have had great success with the local post secondary institutions, the most common barrier appears to be finding a willing post secondary partner, followed closely by a reluctance on the part of colleges to provide classes in the local area or to hold a specified number of seats in their programs for ACE IT students.

Employers

Barriers put up by employers actually broke down into two groups. The first – employers in general – at 27.8%, and local challenges with employers at 16.7%.

Employer issues include a lack of employer willingness to take on students due to their age, and also because they can't afford to have them – especially the small employers; a lack of employer awareness of the benefits of the programs; and employers actually enticing students to become permanent employees before they finish their schooling/training. During the question about roles, it also became evident that feedback to the schools has indicated that many employers are also daunted by the amount of paperwork involved in the process.

Local employment challenges included a reluctance by local unions to allow students to be employed at some of the large local employers leaving small companies as the only alternative; a poor local economy and/or remoteness of location that has resulted in an overall lack of jobs in the area; and (again) a lack of employer incentives to take students.

Lack of Trades Awareness/Bias/Staff Time

A general lack of trades awareness by both students, parents and within the academic community has been a challenge for many coordinators.

Respondents stated that often students are too immature to know what career they want, let alone be well versed in opportunities within the trades. It was also felt that a reluctance by parents to participate in school information sessions at the high school level and to read information sent home (if it reaches there) makes it difficult to communicate with them and to educate them.

This communications gap also ties in to barriers 9 and 10.

"The union at the local mill won't let students in - they have their own seniority-based waiting list, which takes years to climb, and they're not interested in have students jump the line."

School Coordinator

"Counsellors need to look at the programs as viable options for kids - currently they are pushing academics".

*ACE IT/SSA
Coordinator*

Barrier #9 'parental/societal/educator bias' indicates coordinators feel there is a blinkered approach that suggests that everyone/my child is going to university/taking an academic path and so trades are not worth considering, versus the reality that 80% of students are not going to university. While #10 relates to the lack of staff time available, as, while wearing their many hats, coordinators are not finding the time to adequately communicate not only with parents and students, but employers as well, about the programs and the benefits and opportunities within trades careers.

Transportation/Distance

Several respondents noted that transportation and distance were a big barrier for them especially in rural areas.

In rural communities the difficulty of transporting students to classes and/or jobs that were often between 1-2 hours drive (or more) away was a significant challenge as there is a lack of public transportation, students rarely have their drivers licenses, and distance is just too great and their parents don't want them travelling distances over mountain roads, especially in the winter. Transportation was an issue in urban areas as well when there were no bus routes to subdivisions still under construction.

First Nations respondents reported that while the Bands were supportive, there was a general reluctance for the kids to leave home and that was often the only choice for classes and/or jobs.

"Distance is a huge barrier for disbursed rural districts, for both for employment opportunities and college".

*ACE IT/SSA
Coordinator*

Other Barriers

Other perceived barriers included:

- Too much paperwork being required by the ITA makes it hard for administrators and employers.
- A gender imbalance – programs being aimed at traditional trades which boys tend to be interested in, while they are not necessarily promoted as options to girls.

Question 8 – Roles

Which ACE IT or SSA stakeholders need to play a role in removing barriers to encourage more students to enter ACE IT or SSA?

Respondents had many ideas concerning the roles that could be fulfilled by stakeholders involved with the ACE IT and SSA programs. Following are their suggestions on how the different stakeholders could help remove barriers to enrolment.

Students/Parents

Many felt that the onus to initiate change fell on parents rather than students, with 27.8% of respondents stating that parents needed to lose their bias against trades and re-evaluate the career options they promote to their children. They should become more open to the options that trades provide. However, others (25%) felt that both parents and students needed to become better educated about career options and career paths in the trades, and that they should endeavour to develop a clearer understanding of the programs, the academic requirements needed for trades courses, and of the opportunities they provide. For example, students could take more information home and parents could make the effort to attend information sessions at the school.

"Open their minds to the possibilities and the high qualifications needed. Come to meetings!"

Another 12.5% felt that parents could effectively advocate and lobby locally and provincially for trades programming within the school system, and that they could effectively network for jobs/apprenticeship placements within the community through their own established connections. Several (6.95%) felt that students and parents both needed a better understanding of the commitment it takes to successfully complete the programs and to take greater responsibility for that commitment, and that an understanding of that commitment needed to be communicated to them.

Schools/School Districts

As stated by 38.9% of respondents, the number one role that schools and school districts can enact is to ensure that adequate, targeted funding is in place for resources, equipment and facilities.

Secondly 23.6% felt stakeholder communications could be greatly improved. For example, schools and districts should highlight successes, organize more information sessions and talk to parent and employer groups, develop course plans for classes, and share ideas between districts and schools. Also, parents and students need more information earlier in a students' school years (i.e. grade school) concerning the nature and importance of trades.

Another 22.2% thought schools and school districts should be very supportive and make trades programs and their administration a priority in their district.

Employers

Over 69% of respondents felt that the employer's role was to be more supportive and that ways they could be so included:

- Supporting program development.

"Employers must want to take on and support both initiatives and students."

District Coordinator

- Being open to having students and "*recognising this is your and their future*".
- Being more accepting of apprenticeships.
- Donating equipment for the programs.
- Losing the bias/perception that an employer is stuck with a student.
- Joining an advisory group.

Post Secondary Institutions

Difficulty in finding and then working with Post Secondary Institutions as partners was identified as the #2 barrier to enrolment and 72.7% of respondents felt that the most important role colleges could play was to foster relationships with secondary schools and school districts. Ways they could do this were by:

- Opening doors and holding program seats/spaces for ACE IT students
- Being open to partnerships, and not putting up roadblocks to them.
- Working hand-in-hand with schools, especially in regard to resources
- Creating a local partnership team that proactively creates placement/training/teaching opportunities and gender balance in programs.
- Not being so protective of their own programs and recognizing ACE IT as a recruitment tool for the more advanced levels of technical training and as a means of reducing wait lists for entry level training.
- Sharing, rather than centralising facilities.

11.1% felt that colleges could train their instructors to work with youth and help them recognize that secondary school students might need some one-on-one attention. A final 6.9% felt colleges needed to be more flexible in adapting to the needs of ACE IT programs and younger students.

Ministry of Education

As with Schools and School Districts, funding was the number one issue (52.8%). Funding suggestions for the Ministry included:

- Recognise hidden costs – For example - Career funding used to be \$2,750, and schools used to be able to keep all of it, now a school has to give \$1,000-1,500 to the college for tuition, therefore there is not enough money to actually run a school program and pay for the co-ordinator.
- Provide incentives to attract qualified trades people to teaching.
- Provide targeted funding, so the school district doesn't take it for other programs.
- Opening ACE IT funding to adult learners – even if just adult learners without Grade 12 graduation.
- Bringing back funding for students enrolled in SSA programs.

Nearly a quarter of respondents (22.6%) felt that the Ministry needed to address program administration and promotion. Suggestions included:

- Providing a Handbook for setting up ACE IT
- Doing a video to promote trades.
- Advocate at Cabinet for solutions that work in each area of the province, rather than a one size fits all solution. i.e. Considering how to make programs work in rural areas.
- Allowing the colleges to count CTC students as full time FTE's.
- Get information out to industry and be supportive, and have conversations with industry so industry can push/lobby for funding and also so that they understand trades training, including working with the ITA to work with employers.
- Addressing teacher certification requirements.

18.1% felt that the Ministry should also support the programs by ensuring that the school curriculum supports trades courses. i.e. by providing courses in trades math and technical literature rather than English literature.

Streamlining the teacher certification process in order for schools to find qualified instructors is also seen as key to the future success of ACE IT by 16.7% of respondents. It was suggested that the number one way to do so would be to reduce the timeline

for certification for Red Seal qualified personnel from 5 years down to one year or less.

Teachers

Over and over respondents noted that there was an overwhelming bias towards academics within the school system. This was not necessarily intentional, but primarily caused by teachers, who as academics themselves, do not realise or focus on non-academic options for the 80% of students not going on to university. It was suggested by 41.7% of respondents that they should lose the academic blinkers and make an effort to become more aware of the options and qualifications needed for trades courses and certification. They should also be encouraged to realise that trades are not a dumping ground for 'academic losers', that the qualifications needed are on a par with university requirements.

Another 8.3% felt that teachers should actively promote ACE IT and SSA programs to their students. While 6.9% felt they should more actively address real-world needs in their classroom curriculum by relating subjects like math and English to everyday needs.

6.9% also thought that shop teachers, when possible, should formally upgrade their qualifications/certifications so that they were allowed to be 'red seal certified' instructors.

Industry Training Authority

Respondents (37.5%) felt that paperwork requirements for the program are quite onerous, and that although significant efforts have been made to reduce the paperwork and administrative process, that the ITA needed to continue to simplify and streamline paperwork even more. However, it was noted by several that a period of stability would be welcome as well, so that while paperwork was streamlined, requirements and rules should not change frequently or 'on the fly'. Other administrative issues included:

- Recognising that the former apprenticeship counsellors are missed by both schools and employers, and that the schools do not have the time or resources to do what they did. Therefore, bring back the apprenticeship counsellors.
- Appreciating that teachers need to focus on their teaching role.
- Receiving payment in a timely manner, as it is problematic not to.

Promoting and supporting the programs, particularly to employers, was an important ITA role for 33.3% of respondents. That wasn't to say they are displeased with the ITA's current efforts, as many took the time to say how supportive and helpful ITA staff have been, but that even more promotion of the programs could be done. For example:

- Putting more information out about benefits of apprenticeships.
- Improving the current web page so its more user friendly for smaller employers.
- Creating a standardized handbook containing all the information a school-based teacher/coordinator needs to start up and run a successful ACE-IT program (online as well as printed material that can be read over coffee).
- Facilitating dialogue between stakeholders. Fostering openness and cooperation, bringing together secondary schools, post secondary institutions and industry.
- Lobbying with industry for placements.
- Focusing on where industry will be in the next 10 and 20 years, what industry needs will be, and then communicating that to ACE IT and SSA stakeholders.

Having the ITA help address funding issues is seen as an important role by 30.6% of respondents. Suggested roles in this included:

- Helping bring back the summer wage subsidy or offering tax credits to employers for hiring, especially in Northern BC (and the advocating with government to do so).
- Providing incentives for SSA employers.
- Finding ways schools can put modern equipment into schools for requisite and pre-requisite training.
- Going back to the provincial government and saying "*We got the program up and running, and its successful, but we need to revisit the funding models.*"

Roles around credentials and criteria included:

- While not compromising standards, finding a way around the Red Seal requirements – bend the rules a little and fast

track the certification process for existing high school instructors.

- Reviewing SSA scholarship criteria to ensure that students are not losing out on such things as work hour credits. E.g. What is meant as full-time work?
- Helping to develop trades math and technical English programs and working them into curriculum requirements.

Question 9 - Best Things About the Programs

When asked *“What do you feel are the best things about the ACE IT/SSA programs?”* an overwhelmingly positive group of respondents repeatedly made comments such as:

- “They provide students with marketable skills and a viable option to university entrance as a route to becoming productive citizens.”
- “Getting kids a head start – enthusiastic – gives them a foot in the door and a dual credit.”
- “It increases students’ self-esteem.”
- “These programs are changing the face of education delivery at high school and college levels. Providing youth with incredible opportunities to jumpstart their careers. Really engaging students that would otherwise drop out or fail.”
- “Kids have a direction and a reason for attending school and understand the reason for taking courses – e.g. math.”
- “Students are coming out work-ready and safety aware.”
- “Its motivating students and keeping them in school. Students that might have dropped out are now honour students.”
- “The programs bring legitimacy to trades careers. The financial support of districts and students is a HUGE incentive. They have created more of a focus on a significant social need.”
- “Win/win for students and employers – an opportunity for the employer to train them the way they want them.”
- “It has opened doors for students and its helping them to change the mindsets of parents. They’re meeting the

“These are options for all students. Our education system does a good job in offering programs for students who are going to go off to university or college. At last we have a meaningful option for students who are choosing a different pathway.”

*ACE IT/SSA
Coordinator*

needs of students that know what they want, especially the hands-on type kids that may be at risk (as well as the more academic types) – they end up taking responsibility for what they do and understand the relevancy of their course work.”

- “Opportunity of a lifetime for students! Shows them the value of education and trades and needs in the future. Makes happy kids, which equals kids off the street!”
- “It does not take a young person very long working at minimum wage to realize that there should be better options. ACE-IT and SSA provide a springboard for students to make a solid transition into the workplace, commanding wages much higher than minimum wage in line with their increased skill levels. In addition, they foster awareness in the student and parent community regarding careers in trades something we all need to focus on.”
- “Relevancy for students. Getting a head start on a possible career. Providing choice around their time tables – i.e. school morning/work afternoon.”

Question 10 – Future Enrolment Levels

If the barriers identified can be removed, what do you feel are reasonable enrolment levels for ACE IT / SSA for your school district in the: next – year, 2 years, 3 years?

This proved a difficult question to answer in terms of actual numbers. While almost all respondents were very positive, and felt that with some or all of the barriers removed their numbers would definitely increase, they couldn't say in definitive terms what those numbers would be.

Many stated that they could initially double them within 1-2 years and then would expect increases anywhere from 10-50% in each successive year. Others felt that they would be more likely to work on a long term goal based on a percentage of their student population. Several expected this number to be around 4-5% of their student population, while one thought it could be as high as 30%.

Some of the comments included:

- “We're struggling with declining enrolment, holding at the present level would actually be an increase.”
- “Industry is snapping them up before grad.”

- "Population 8,000 – really happy to have 10 kids!"
- "Minimum goal of 10% of student population by 2010."
- "Expect a drop in enrolment as programs level out and enrolments overall decline. Funding will improve, but need sliding scale for funding based on school size and location."
- "Depends on the number of courses able to be offered, plus starting early with *Gateway to Trades* in Grade 10."
- "Could double ACE IT by next year and slightly increase SSA. SSA can grow more if the larger employers come on board. Growth will depend on the new person taking over and what their priorities are, as they will wear several hats."
- "I would like to see us running 6-10 programs in the next 2-3 years. As a result, the enrolment would be 120-200 students (currently 30)."
- "SSA – increase of 5 per year if employment is offered. ACE IT is already growing, but if more trades could be offered - chef's training, hairdressing, mechanical trades (be delivered within the school curriculum) the interest would expand rapidly. Perhaps double. We had five students in welding this year, we will have 15 in three trades next year. Imagine if more programs could be offered."
- "We can grow ACE IT a little, SSA will stay the same. We need more teachers before more growth can occur."
- "Currently 0 ACE IT, would like to see 12 two years from now. SSA has 20 and can grow incrementally from each year – success encourages others."
- "(rural/remote) about 2-6 kids per year."

Questions 11 & 12 - Industry Advisory Group/Action Plan

"Does your district have an Industry Advisory Group?" and "Does your District have an Industry Training Action plan?"

Only 37.5% of respondents reported having an Industry Advisory Group, while 51.4% did not, and 1.4% didn't know if there was one. Another 6.9% reported that they are in the process of forming one. 2.8% did not respond to either question. Several reported that their groups were not necessarily formal ones, but

51.4% don't have an advisory group

they definitely relied on the expertise they could call on in their community and at the post secondary level. Comments included:

- “Used to have, and met regularly, but government said didn’t have to have, so ‘powers that be’ said stop meetings and spend time elsewhere.”
- “Yes, we created a new “Transitions Team” last school year comprised of each secondary school’s admin, work experience teacher and work experience coordinator(s). However, the representation needs to expand into business and post-secondary partners regularly sitting at the table. The role of the committee is to consider graduation requirements, career options and post-secondary options and create a team approach to strengthening our position in all areas.”

65.3% don’t have an action plan

When asked about an Industry Action Plan, several responded “What’s that? What does it look like?” Only 20.8% had one, while a whopping 65.3% did not. 4.2% didn’t know if they did, and 6.9% have plans in the development. Comments included:

- “No – no time to do it. What does it look like? Is there a template? It would be helpful.”
- “Yes – Tied in to Accountability contract, school completion rates.”
- “Don’t know what it means/is, but do have a school plan for developing and establishing apprenticeship programs. Developed 5 programs in 2 years – almost bit off more than they could chew.”
- “Yes – have a District structure. It takes 2 years to bring on an ACE IT program on-line in the school.”

I believe ACE IT and SSA are the future career programs for schools. Employers are willing and its what youths (but not all) need. Colleges that are not getting on board are missing something.

Note: An observation is that Districts that did have an advisory group and an action plan were the districts that were rating their program success in the 4-5 range.

Other Comments

Other comments ran the gamut and included:

- “Both the ACE IT and SSA programs are of enormous value to our students, their future and the future of our communities and the province. More money, time and resources need to be allocated in this direction.”
- “Local press has been great.”

*ACE IT/SSA
Coordinator*

- “We – ITA, Schools, MOE, Business, Post-secondary – are beginning to have rigorous dialogue and becoming much more collaborative in creating structures that effectively prepare students for their adult lives. We’re on the right track and the potential is huge. An overriding goal should be to resource the system – human, financial and organizational - so that secondary school students are highly motivated to attend school knowing there are multiple options to choose from, there is meaning to what they are doing, their learning is transferable to their adult life and that transition to careers, training and post-secondary is relatively seamless after graduation from grade 12. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.”
- “At Howe Sound Secondary we value both of these programs very highly. We did a pilot for the Cooks Training ACE IT program and have now expanded our offerings to two programs. We would like to expand to three programs in the near future. This year we have the highest number of SSA students in our history. We are extremely happy with this and hope to keep expanding. We are self-reliant and have a principal who is well versed in ACE IT program procedures and in working with Post-Secondary Institutions. We have a District Assistant for Career Programs who takes care of all the paper work associated with both programs. We don’t ever meet as a District but I attend the Lower Mainland Career Coordinators’ meetings and report to Pemberton and Whistler. We would be happy to have the Northern schools (Whistler and Pemberton) expand their programs as well.”
- “We have a huge opportunity here but it will need government and industry and union support – tri party organization is paramount. Then offer employers initial financial support to induce hiring. Economic growth and the need to fill retirements will do the rest. We have to open the training systems to allow distant and remote areas an opportunity to join the “party”. Local high schools could be that opportunity. Finally promote, promote, and promote. Thank you.”
- “I am a red seal millwright. I have only taught for a few years. I have many connections and speak the trade language. I still do not like the direction of all this. The post secondary institutions need to let go of 1st year apprenticeships and give it to high schools. High schools need to take trades seriously and give teachers the time and students to do the job.

With that said, I need to work in the confines of the system. I am happy with things, but it is always the same problem. School Districts(mine) will not commit. It is always the same question 'What do we get out of it'? Put students first!"

Conclusions/Observations

Successful Programs

Successful ACE IT and SSA programs tend to have:

- A dedicated person coordinating the programs
- A cooperative relationship with their local college
- A location in a larger centre with a bigger student population and proximity to post secondary institutions and employers
- Established relationships with employers so they are aware of the programs and provide support through employment, participation on advisory committees, donations of materials and equipment
- A School Board, District and Principals who are very supportive of delivering trades options
- An industry advisory group and trades training action plan
- Promoted trades options and the ACE IT/SSA programs to students and parents
- Teachers and counselling staff who are aware of trade career options and the requirements for students wishing to pursue them

Rural Challenges

Rural schools need help to develop more flexible options for ACE IT and SSA delivery to address several inherent challenges which include:

- Small student populations that make getting enough students to run an ACE IT program difficult
- Long distances to post secondary institutions and employers
- Limited access to teacher's qualified to teach trades programs
- A single large employer whose union will not allow student apprentices to "jump the seniority list"

Foundation vs. Start-up

Some School Districts have a foundation of experience and pre-existing relationships with employers and colleges from their delivery of programs such as Career and Technical Centres. It is much easier for these Districts to deliver new programs like ACE IT. In Districts where this foundation doesn't exist the start-up phase for ACE IT and SSA programs is very resource intensive as everything from gearing up staff to understand the programs and associated paperwork, to establishing the relationships with colleges and employers, to promotion and creating awareness in students, parents and District employees to has to start from scratch.

This requirement for a front end commitment of resources to get ACE IT and SSA programs running tends to create a chicken and egg problem. Districts who are unsure whether there is sufficient interest in trades programs and whether they should devote resources to these initiatives typically have a part time coordinator who doesn't have enough time to develop all the required relationships and promote the program enough to get a high enrolment. As a result student take-up is low and the programs are seen to be not viable given the resources available to run them. This becomes an even more daunting prospect if the District needs to make investments to develop shop facilities and/or hire additional teaching staff given declining enrolments and the tight financial environment. So the chicken and egg is low enrolments don't warrant investments in the programs but, without the investment the enrolments don't increase.

Academic Bias

The bias towards academic programs is still alive and well in the minds of many parents, teachers, students and administrators. Consequently, programs like ACE IT and SSA are sometimes still seen as second best elective options and, in some cases, dumping grounds for poor students. This academic bias is also reflected in the recognition of teaching credentials as a person with a 4 year university degree is only required to complete their Professional Development Program (PDP) to become a certified teacher. Whereas a person who has completed a 4 year trades certification receives no recognition for their training and is required to complete a 4 year university degree and their PDP on top of their existing credential.

Communications

As evidenced by the number of comments about communications and the promotion of the programs, although there has been a

significant effort on the part of many stakeholders to develop communications tools - such as a comprehensive section of the ITA's website being devoted to youth and trades, to promote the trades and provide information about ACE IT and SSA – apparently not all stakeholders are accessing the information available, or find that what is available does not meet their communication needs.

In addition, and again in spite of promotional efforts, what is available does not seem to help in dispelling the parental/societal/academic bias towards trades. This would suggest that stakeholders need to be truly marketed to, rather than informed – in marketing terms they need to be 'hooked' (have their attention grabbed). To do that perhaps a three-pronged more focused, upbeat top level marketing campaign needs to be developed to 'hook' targeted stakeholder groups:

1. Parents and Students - Specifically to highlight the career opportunities/career paths, both short and long term, available in the trades, and that the academic requirements while possibly being a bit different from those needed for university are none the less just as high.
2. Educators - To educate educators within the secondary school system on the realities of the working world, the academic needs of the non-university bound, and about ACE IT, SSA and any other trades-focused initiatives, such as Yes2it.
3. Employers – To emphasise the value of the programs to the future of industry, the opportunities they provide, and the long term value of allowing students to complete their education and training.

If done in conjunction with industry (who could provide valuable input on needs/qualifications/career paths etc.) it would also serve as a way to involve and further engage industry in the process, and they would also make excellent sponsors for short televised "infomercials".

Existing detailed promotional resources would continue to be the foundation of the marketing program.

Post Secondary Partnerships

While some colleges have been enthusiastic partners with Districts developing ACE IT and SSA programs, other post secondary institutions have been reluctant or completely uninterested in

partnering with Districts. It would be very worthwhile to have successful partnership groups share their experience and suggestions with other Districts to highlight for them how a successful partnership can enhance both relationships and the programs and is good for all involved.

Noteworthy Suggestions from Participants

Distance Learning

(From – SD #84 who currently have no programs) “We did explore a partnership with North Island College, but it didn’t go anywhere. Is there a way to use distance learning? The South Slave SD (NWT) model works – uses college facilities & residence during college down time, combined with distance learning. We are also talking with Powell River and looking at programs including adults.

Education and certification is important to First Nations to meet their needs. We would love to find a way to make the programs work. Possibly using distance technology such as Elluminate to supplement hands-on work/training outside of the community? Is there a way for retired trades people/teachers to rotate in for short periods of time? We also need an “intro to trades” and to look at the skill sets needed, and also look at adults and teens. We participate in the Rural Schools Group.”

Funding

“Another level of support for these programs would be to link them to wage subsidy initiatives for host employers. Whether Federal or Provincial, these programs could subsidize student’s wages on a sliding scale (75%, 50%, 25%) for varying periods of time depending on the learning plan for each student. With incentives like this it would make these programs much more solid and viable. Industry would be able to come on-side in a much larger way. Perhaps this is more a “wish”, than a comment or a suggestion, but while working with Employment and Immigration Canada, I wrote these contracts binding students and employers. They can be a very powerful tool.”

“Currently the school districts have to pay the college to have a liaison/coordinator person, e.g., four school districts on Vancouver Island pay Comosun to have an ACE IT coordinator. It would be better if the Ministry paid as this money is being diverted from other areas. Its great though that there is a liaison at college level between schools and colleges as it really encourages partnerships to flourish.”

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received during the interviews a number of suggested recommendations emerged. These recommendations include actions that can be taken over the short term and as well as ones that will require longer lead times. The recommendations include suggestions for all of the ACE IT and SSA delivery partners including the Industry Training Authority, school districts, colleges, employers and the Ministry of Education, as well as parents and students.

Actions that can be undertaken over the short term:

Industry Training Authority

- Consider the creation of one time grants for School Districts to start-up or expand their ACE IT / SSA programs to alleviate the front end costs associated with these initiatives (This could potentially be offered in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and/or Industry organizations)
- Review the funding formula for ACE IT and SSA in light of the costs associated with coordination, payments to post secondary institutions and program development/expansion costs.
- Investigate how SD #36's (Surrey) websites for SSA www.gossa.ca and for Trading UP www.gostradingup.ca could be shared or adapted as a province wide resource/promotional tool for coordinators. (ITA in collaboration with the Min of Ed)
- With input from Districts who have successfully developed programs, develop a web based "How to" resource/handbook for Districts to establish or enhance ACE IT and SSA programs. The "How to" resources could include a basic guide for the steps necessary to start a program, including: what steps need to be taken, who can help and what can they help with, information on establishing industry advisory committees, outlines for trades training plans, directories of industry associations and companies, listings of post secondary institutions interested in partnering on ACE IT & SSA along with any requirements - e.g. teacher must have Red Seal, information on the challenge process for teachers to get their Red Seal, sample promotional materials for various stakeholders (students, parents, employers), on-line ACE IT and SSA coordinator discussion forum pose questions, etc.

- Work with the Ministry of Education to develop a delivery strategy for rural schools to address unique challenges. Establish a working group with representatives from rural Districts to create this delivery strategy which may involve on-line learning options and use of the new Mobile Trades Training Unit
- Investigate alternative technical training partners in cases where Districts are unable to develop a strong relationship with their local college. This could take the form of a listing of colleges who are interested in partnering with Districts not necessarily in their local area.
- Continue to streamline the administration requirements of ACE IT as much as possible and look at making the website more user friendly for employers
- Reduce payment timelines.
- Facilitate the use of effective tracking systems for schools by distributing information on existing best practices and/or provide a standardized on-line tracking tool.
- Expand the promotion of ACE IT , SSA and general trades awareness with students, parents, teachers and employers, including investigating the feasibility of a cross-stakeholder marketing campaign, possibly including short television infomercials funded/sponsored by industry.
- Investigate ways to promote and encourage “girls/women in trades”
- Encourage employers to not hire students until after they have graduated to allow students to complete their education and training

Ministry of Education

- Set performance targets for Districts for the percentage of graduating students that complete ACE IT or SSA would then demonstrate the importance of offering these program options. If funding allows, attainment of these targets could be tied to provision of supplemental funding for up-grading of facilities, materials, professional development, etc
- Consider the creation of a capital projects fund to support District's creation or up-dating of shop facilities in order to deliver trades training programs

- Review the student funding model for students who are enrolled in trades certification programs in order to address the higher costs associated with delivering the shop classes (which have fewer students) versus academic courses which are lower cost to the Districts. This may help to address the balance of university preparation to non-university post secondary options.
- Work with the ITA to develop a delivery strategy for rural schools to address their unique challenges.
- Work with the ITA to review SSA scholarship criteria to ensure that it is giving students a fair and flexible opportunity to meet the work requirements – For example, To ensure that someone who, after graduation, is working as an apprentice, but also going to college, and therefore not working as many full-time hours as required can meet the employment criteria. Rather than ‘employed full time 6 months after graduation, should the criteria be “continuation in an apprenticeable trade”, period (delete the ‘full time’)?
- Investigate opening ACE IT to adult learners
- Work with the ITA to develop a “How To” resource/handbook for ACE IT and SSA.

School Districts

- Ensure sufficient resources are devoted to the coordination of ACE IT and SSA programs
- Take every opportunity to promote trades training and ACE IT/SSA programs, e.g. newsletters, web sites, parent/teacher nights, sporting events, graduation ceremonies to overcome academic bias of parents, students and teacher
- Establish Industry Advisory Committees and Trades Training Plans if none currently exist.
- Educate faculty and administrative staff in your District on the qualifications needed for and options provided by trades programs and careers. Then engage them in promoting trades programs, including encouraging girls.
- Undertake joint initiatives and information sharing with other Districts

- Encourage students and parents to use their local contacts for apprenticeship and work experience placement opportunities.

Employers

- Be a proactive partner with schools and Districts either as an individual company or through associations, Chambers of Commerce, unions, etc
- Do whatever you can. If you can't hire an apprentice, offer an unpaid work experience or site tour or materials
- Help promote ACE IT and SSA with other companies, associations and in the community
- Be aware that in spite of labour shortages, that you should not hire students before they have graduated as it is important for the future of the industry that students complete their education and training

Post Secondary Institutions

- Be more open and cooperative on the ACE IT program. If colleges have concerns be clear about them and work to address them cooperatively. Example: if colleges feel it is critical for teachers to have their journey person certification, develop a program to help teachers to challenge and receive this certification
- Explore ways to offer classes closer to schools (a particular issue in rural areas)
- Foster partnerships with Secondary Schools and Districts
- Investigate how other colleges, such as Comosun, have taken a leadership approach and developed successful, sometimes multi-district, partnerships with secondary schools and then create your own local/regional partnership teams

Students/Parents

- Take the time to explore trades as a career option. Attend ACE IT SSA information sessions offered by the school
- Become aware of the requirements to complete an ACE IT or SSA program (academic, time, work ethic, travel) and apply the required commitment (students) or support (parents) to achieve a successful outcome.

- Utilize their local contacts for apprenticeship and work experience placement opportunities.

Actions for the longer term:

Develop and add to the curriculum appropriate trades math and English (technical reading and writing) courses, ensuring that math courses offered include 'applications' as well as the essentials and principles.

It was noted by many respondents that the current math and English programs simply don't prepare students for the working world. For example, in several trades they need to understand both imperial and metric systems and then know how to practically apply them in their everyday work practices. They also need to know how to read and understand technical texts and manuals and how to apply the information in them. Technical language is far different from that in English literature, and without comprehensive trades English skills they are not fully prepared, and in fact are hindered, in the working world of trades and other businesses.

Supporting the start-up, coordination and day-to-day administration of the ACE IT and SSA programs

Coordination and administration is seen a critical factor for the successful delivery of the ACE IT and SSA programs. However, given the number of stakeholders this is very time intensive, particularly during start-up and during the ongoing interaction with industry to arrange work experience placements, donations, and to get feedback. School Districts, the Ministry of Education and the ITA should all look at ways they can provide funding to support the resources, equipment and facilities necessary to maintain and grow the ACE IT and SSA programs.

The ITA and School Districts could also facilitate donations from Industry partners and look for ways that local industry associations or companies could be encouraged to consider ways to support the coordination function from the industry side. Some associations have already taken on this role and one of the employers interviewed in FHC's previous report - *A Review of ACE IT* - indicated that the schools should ask more from their industry partners.

Increasing the supply of certified teachers

The general shortage of skills trades people combined with recent changes to the teacher certification process for journeypersons has contributed to a shortage of qualified trades teachers. Colleges have already assisted some high school teachers to

successfully attain their trade certification and could be a partner in this initiative.

It is recommended School Districts support trades teachers to attain their industry training certification. College partners can often assist with this certification process.

It is also recommended that the ITA work with the Ministry of Education and the BC College of Teachers to make it easier for certified journeypersons to become certified high school teachers.

Look at ways to support rural communities

Transportation problems and the distance to, and lack of local post secondary classes/partners, coupled with a lack of local employment opportunities was identified as a huge obstacle for many rural and rural/remote communities. It is recommended that the Ministry and the ITA look at ways help overcome these obstacles, including investigating a combination of distance learning using an Learning Management System (LMS) and using college facilities, including dormitories, during college downtime, and/or hiring retired trades teachers for short rotating stints in remote communities – such as organizations like SCORE and Senior Corps do in the corporate world, and Open Mind does overseas or perhaps through World University Service of Canada (WUSC).

Develop a Long-Term Province-wide Secondary School Industry Training Action Plan/Guideline

Interview responses indicated that not all Districts have a good understanding of industry needs, and currently don't have to time to undertake a study and analysis of them. However, for the programs to continue to grow, and for them to be graduating students who can successfully finish their education and training and then find employment in their field educators must first understand what the needs of industry are in the long term; first in terms of skills needs, and secondly the educational requirements for those skills.

As this is no doubt an initiative already undertaken by the ITA for other interest/industry groups, it would make sense for the ITA to be the party responsible for developing such a plan for use as a building block for ACE IT and SSA. As it would no doubt be a large undertaking, it could perhaps be done in stages – for example, by industry sector, with a different sector being done each year/every six months over a 2-5 year period.

Develop a Long-Term Trades Marketing Plan

Develop and implement a long term, multi-phase/multi-media (print, web, video, radio, television, in-person presentations) marketing plan which would include a campaign (funded/sponsored in part by industry) to address 'trades bias' and to strongly promote careers in trades and the ACE IT and SSA programs.

Additional components could include a 1st Nations module to highlight successful role models for 1st Nations students, and a module to focus on attracting girls to trades professions.

Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

	#	%	
Total to contact	92		
Total reached	72	78.3%	
In start up or don't have ACE IT/SSA	8	11.1%	
Question	#	%	Average
Coordinator for ACE IT	8	11.1%	
Coordinator for SSA	5	6.9%	
Coordinator for Both	59	81.9%	
Additional	45	62.5%	
Increasing	49	68.1%	
Decreasing	4	5.6%	
Staying the Same	19	26.4%	
# of ACE IT students	2,724		
# of SSA students	995	3,719	
Employer Awareness SSA			2.7
Student Awareness ACE IT			3.0
Student Awareness SSA			3.2
Avail & Future Opportunities			3.8
Program Working Overall ACE			3.2
Program Working Overall SSA			3.4

Stakeholder Feedback continued

Question	#	%¹	Average
Barriers Yes	67	93.1%	
Barriers No	3	4.2%	
Students/Parents Yes	52	72.2%	
Students/Parents no	18	25.0%	
School/SD Yes	55	76.4%	
School/SD No	16	22.2%	
Employers Yes	51	70.8%	
Employers No	20	27.8%	
PS Yes	53	73.6%	
PS No	17	23.6%	
Min of Ed Yes	56	77.8%	
Min of Ed No	14	19.4%	
Teachers Yes	50	69.4%	
Teachers No	19	26.4%	
ITA Yes	54	75.0%	
ITA No	15	20.8%	
Advisory Group Yes	27	37.5%	
Advisory Group No	37	51.4%	
Don't know	1	1.4%	
In development	5	6.9%	
Action Plan Yes	15	20.8%	
Action Plan No	47	65.3%	
Don't know	3	4.2%	
In development	5	6.9%	

¹ Note: In some instances a small percentage of respondents did not respond to the question.

Appendix B – List of Contacts and Respondents

ACE IT & SSA BARRIERS QUESTIONNAIRRE - CONTACT LIST			
	School District	First	Last
Completed Questionnaires with:			
1	SD # 05 Southeast Kootenay	Brian	Conrad
1	SD # 06 Rocky Mountain	Wayne	Pelter
1	SD # 08 Kootenay Lake	Frank	Maricso
1	SD # 19 Revelstoke	Lori	Milmine
1	SD # 20 Kootenay-Columbia	Richard	Dewdney
1	SD # 20 Kootenay Columbia	Janet	Morton
1	SD # 22 Vernon	Tom	Williamson
1	SD # 23 Central Okanagan	Kelly	McRae
1	SD # 23 Central Okanagan	Stacey	Smith
1	SD # 27 Cariboo-Chilcotin	Gordon	Armour
1	SD # 28 Quesnel	Ed	Coleman
1	SD # 33 Chilliwack	Garry	Wall
1	SD # 34 Abbotsford	Irene	O'Neill
1	SD # 34 Abbotsford	Pat	Henman
1	SD # 35 Langley	Judy	Gerein
1	SD # 36 Surrey	Vicki	Munn
1	SD # 38 Richmond	Ken	Caig
1	SD # 39 Vancouver	Carole	Macfarlane
1	SD # 40 New Westminster	Sandra	Marsden
1	SD # 40 New Westminster	Betina	Ali
1	SD # 41 Burnaby	Donna	Scott
1	SD # 42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Ron	Lancaster
1	SD # 43 Coquitlam	Frank	Gigliotti
1	SD # 44 North Vancouver	Chris	Hough
1	SD # 45 West Vancouver	William	McKitrick
1	SD # 46 Sunshine Coast	Rick	Gibb
1	SD # 47 Powell River	Jim	Palm
1	SD # 47 Powell River	Troy	Marshall
1	SD # 48 Howe Sound	Katheryn	Strilchuk
1	SD # 48 Howe Sound	Linda	Firbank
1	SD # 48 Howe Sound (Overall)	Rick	Carruthers
1	SD # 50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte	Lorrie	Joron
1	SD # 50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte	Angus	Wilson
1	SD # 51 Boundary	Walter	Osellame
1	SD # 51 Boundary	Karen	Dewynter
1	SD # 52. Prince Rupert	Michael	Crawford
1	SD # 53 Okanagan Similkameen	Jim	Insley
1	SD # 57 Prince George	Rory	Summers
1	SD # 57 Prince George	Tim	Power
1	SD # 58 Nicola-Similkameen	Colin	Dixon
1	SD # 59 Peace River South	Rob	Dennis
1	SD # 59 Peace River South	Frances	Armstrong
1	SD # 60 Peace River North	Brian	Campbell
1	SD # 61 Greater Victoria	Dave	Scott
1	SD # 62 Sooke	Pat	Mooney
1	SD # 63 Saanich	Roger	Pires
1	SD # 63 Saanich	Gary	Arsunalt
	School District	First	Last

1	SD # 63 Saanich	Keith	Humphrey
1	SD # 64 Gulf Islands	Maggie	Allison
1	SD # 67 Okanagan Skaha	Dave	Kalaski
1	SD # 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith	Dave	Street
1	SD # 70 Alberni	Brian	Laviolette
1	SD # 71 Comox Valley	Rob	Moore
1	SD # 72 Campbell River	Vicki	Lundine
1	SD # 73 Kamloops-Thompson	Greg	Howard
1	SD # 75 Mission	Stan	Weir
1	SD # 78 Fraser-Cascade	Marlene	Neil
1	SD # 79 Cowichan	Betty	Milne
1	SD # 79 Cowichan	Marilyn	Sanford
1	SD # 81 Fort Nelson	Lynne	McNeil
1	SD # 82 Coast Mountain	Brigetta	Vanheek
1	SD # 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap	Wayne	Spencer
1	SD # 84 Vancouver Island West	Bruce	Jansen
1	SD # 85 Vancouver Island North	Kathy	Bedard
1	SD # 85 Port McNeil	John	Bramham
1	SD # 87 Stikine	Gary	Hannam
1	SD # 91 Nechako Lakes	Darren	Carpenter
1	SDs # 61,62,63,64, 79	Kelly	Knister
1	Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School	Kim	Hansen
1	Seabird Island Community School	Patricia	Raymond-Adair
1	Timothy Christian	Herb	Krul
1	Vernon Christian School	Rod	Austin
72	Total Contacted		

Questionnaire not completed

1	SD # 05 Southeast Kootenay's	Bill	Gook
1	SD # 06 Rocky Mountain	Joanne	Bragg
1	SD # 10 Arrow Lakes	Anne	Beliveau
1	SD # 19 Revelstoke	Mike	Hooker
1	SD # 37 Delta	Marjike	Merrick
1	SD # 48 Howe Sound	Rick	Erickson
1	SD # 49 Central Coast	Shelly	Sheriff
1	SD # 50 Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte	Mike	Woods
1	SD # 51 Boundary	Michael	Strukoff
1	SD # 54 Smithers - Buckley Valley	Jon	Goalder
1	SD # 63 Saanich	Nancy	MacDonald
1	SD # 69 Qualicum	Sean	McKierahan
1	SD # 71 Comox Valley	Bob	Thompson
1	SD # 74 Gold Trail	Dianne	Parkinson
1	SD # 78 Fraser Cascade	Patsy	Graham
1	SD # 78 Fraser Cascade	Mike	Stolee
1	SD # 85 Port Hardy	Jay	Dixon
1	SD # 87 Stikine	Garr	Roth
1	SD # 91 Nechako Lakes	Ken	Young
1	Credo Christian High	Harry	Moes
20	Total not contacted		
92			

Appendix C – Interview Questions

Examining Barriers to Student Enrolment in ACE IT or SSA

Questionnaire for District ACE IT & SSA Coordinators

Name: _____

School District: _____

Coordinator for: ACE IT ___ SSA ___ Both ___

Do you have additional Coordinator(s) for ACE IT ___ SSA ___
Both ___

How long have you been coordinating the ACE IT/SSA Program in
your _____ District?

How long has your district had a coordinator?

How many students do you currently have enrolled in your ACE IT
/ _____ SSA _____ programs?

ACE IT _____ SSA _____

Has this number been increasing, decreasing, staying the same?

How would rate employer awareness of SSA?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
5

very poor poor adequate good very
good

How would you rate student awareness of SSA and ACE IT

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
 5
 very poor poor adequate good very
 good

How would you rate available and future opportunities for ACE IT and SSA work placements in your community?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
 5
 very poor poor adequate good very
 good

On the following scale, how well do you feel that your ACE IT / SSA programs are working overall:

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----5
 very poorly poorly adequately well very well

Why?

Do you feel there are any barriers to more students entering/staying in ACE IT or SSA programs? If yes, please describe.

(If "Yes" to Q 7 proceed to Q8, If "No" proceed to Q 9)

Which ACE IT or SSA stakeholders need to play a role in removing barriers to encourage more students to enter ACE IT or SSA?

Students/Parents (Y/N) ___ Role: _____

Schools/School Districts ___ Role: _____

Employers	___	Role:
Post Secondary Institutions	___	Role:
Ministry of Education	___	Role:
Teachers	___	Role:
Industry Training Authority	___	Role:

What do you feel are the best things about the ACE IT/SSA programs?

If the barriers identified can be removed, what do you feel are reasonable enrolment levels for ACE IT / SSA for your school district in the:

ACE IT: next – year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years _____?

SSA: next – year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years _____?

Does your district have an Industry Advisory Group?

Does your District have an Industry Training Action plan?

Any additional comments or suggestions?

Appendix D – Interview Comments Received