

## NEWS RELEASE

---

For Immediate Release  
June 29, 2006

### **High school trades training program helps students ACE IT**

*Nine out of ten students plan to continue apprenticeship on finishing high school*

**Richmond, B.C.** – An independent evaluation report of the ACE IT program released by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) indicates that the program is highly successful at engaging high school students in trades apprenticeships.

Introduced in February 2005, ACE IT – or Accelerated Credit Enrollment in Industry Training – is designed to give B.C. students a head start on their post-secondary apprenticeship training while still in high school.

“The ITA is committed to raising awareness of and interest in the trades among youth. Both this report and the growth in youth participation since we launched ACE IT indicate that we’re on the right track,” said Brian Clewes, Chief Executive Officer of the ITA. “And with an aging population and record job growth creating shortages of skilled workers in B.C., initiatives such as ACE IT are crucial to developing a skilled workforce that both meets employers’ short-term needs and is sustainable in the long-term.”

Youth participation in industry training programs has more than tripled since ACE IT was introduced. Over 3,800 students are now registered in either that program or Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA).

“Through ACE IT, students are given invaluable exposure to the skilled trades with the opportunity to learn through hands-on experiences,” said Hon. Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development. “The evaluation of ACE IT shows that we are succeeding in reaching students and shining a light on the tremendous opportunities that the skilled trades provide.”

The evaluation, conducted by Fulford Harbour Consulting on behalf of the ITA, included interviews with students, parents, teachers, employers, school administrators and post-secondary institutions from across B.C. The survey focused specifically on those involved in the first ACE IT intake of February 2005, and sought to measure effectiveness as well as identify areas for future improvements.

Highlights of the report include:

- Students, parents and employers all gave the ACE IT program a satisfaction rating of at least 4 out of 5
- In an unsolicited response, 11 per cent of students indicated that the ACE IT program had kept them in high school
- 89 per cent of students said that they would continue their apprenticeship following high school
- 61 per cent of employers have gone on to hire their ACE IT students as apprentices, and 3 out of 4 are planning to take on additional ACE IT students

ACE IT allows students to earn both high school graduation credits and a minimum of a Level 1 apprenticeship technical training credit. Work experience placements also earn students advance credit toward the on-the-job component of an apprenticeship program. ACE IT is currently offered in more than 20 trades and 34 school districts across the province.

“ACE IT helps B.C. secondary school students gain in-demand skills and opens the door to a rewarding career in the trades,” said Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Education, Deputy Premier and Minister Responsible for Early Learning and Literacy. “This successful program is one of the many ways we’re making school more relevant to students’ interests and goals.”

A full copy of the report can be found at [www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca)

*The Industry Training Authority is a provincial government agency mandated to govern, expand and improve B.C.'s industry training system. The authority works to create greater flexibility and accountability within the system, to better align training outcomes with labour market needs, and to meet B.C.'s skilled training needs now and in the future.*

- 30 -

**Contact:**

Lisa Dooling  
Industry Training Authority  
Tel: 604-214-8710  
Cell: 604-671-8710  
ldooling@itabc.ca