

For Immediate Release

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YOUTH DAY CONFERENCE AND APPRENTICESHIP AWARD PROMOTE THE SKILLED TRADES AND REINVIGORATE HANDS-ON LEARNING

ITA promotes innovative programming and initiatives at annual conference to better incorporate the skilled trades into the education system

Vancouver, BC – The [Industry Training Authority's \(ITA\)](#) 10th annual Youth Day conference was held this week at the Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver, and brought together more than 150 career educators, employers and industry representatives to share best practices, and to discuss the many benefits of apprenticeship in the trades.

The theme of this year's event was '10 Years of Building the Trades Together.' Partners attending shared perspectives on youth apprentices, with a primary focus on key industry insights, innovative programming, and initiatives available for educators to best incorporate trades into their curriculum.

At Youth Day, the Ministry of Education and ITA announced future changes to the Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) Award to further increase opportunities for secondary school students. The Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) Award requirements have been modified to now include school-age students participating in SSA after their secondary school graduation. The \$1,000 award is also available to all students 15 years old or older in Grades 10, 11 or 12, including students in the Grade 12 Dogwood or Adult Graduation Programs.

SSA and Accelerated Credit Enrollment in Industry Training (ACE IT) are both dual credit programs that allow students to begin their trades training while still in secondary school. By taking these programs, students are able to graduate with a secondary school diploma and the first level of a trade.

Since 2014, 1,048 new students have registered in the SSA program, a 10 percent increase from last year, and the highest number since 2009. The ACE IT program has also seen an increase, with over 18 percent more students registering over the previous year.

ITA's youth strategy, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is aligned with recommendations from [B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint](#) and the [McDonald Report](#) to get more youth into trades careers with more school program options.

Quotes

Mike Bernier, Minister of Education

"ITA is proof that investing in students early reaps lifelong rewards. The Youth Day conference builds on the strong foundation districts and schools have built with their skills and trades programs. It brings together career educators from across the province for insightful discussion. The changes announced to the SSA award requirements make the trades even more accessible for students with a passion for



hands-on learning.”

Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour

“We are expecting thousands of job openings in our province in the next ten years as a result of retirements and economic growth. One of our government’s priorities is to ensure that students and their families have the information they need to understand the diverse career opportunities of the future and then to help them map a path to success in the future. The Industry Training Authority’s annual Youth Day is an acknowledgement of the important contribution that career educators and counsellors make as they support students right across the province.”

Boyd Turnbull, Career Education Coordinator and Technology Education Teacher, Similkameen Elementary School

“With the huge success of the week-long YES 2 IT event last year at each elementary in School District 23, it is clear how valuable it is to invest in trades exploration for our students. It is important that educators recognize the importance of trades exploration as a means to introduce students to the exciting career opportunities available in the skilled trades.”

Erin Johnston, Director, Training Investment, ITA

“Building a skilled workforce for the future depends on the youth of today. ITA is committed to providing youth programs and leading youth initiatives that are crucial to arming educators with the tools they need to bring hands-on learning to the classroom and reawaken youth’s interest in the skilled trades.”

About the Industry Training Authority

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia’s skilled trades system. ITA works with employers, employees, industry, labour, training providers and government to issue credentials, manage apprenticeships, set program standards and increase opportunities in the trades. ITA is also a key collaborator in [B.C.’s Skills For Jobs Blueprint](#), which sets out a plan for re-engineering our education and training system to support our growing and changing economy, and to help British Columbians take full advantage of the opportunities presented by these changes. www.itabc.ca

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BACKGROUNDER – TRADES TRAINING FOR YOUTH

About Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA)

[SSA](#) is a dual credit program that allows students to begin the work-based training component of an apprenticeship program while in secondary school. Students “earn while they learn,” receiving credit toward both a high school diploma and an apprenticeship.

About Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) Award

The SSA Award is a \$1,000 scholarship for school-aged youth Apprentices that maintain a C+ average or better on Grade 12 numbered courses, and report a total of at least 900 work-based training hours to ITA by December 31 of the school year the student turns 19 years old.

About Accelerated Credit Enrollment in Industry Training (ACE IT)

[ACE IT](#) is a dual credit program that permits youth to begin their training while still in secondary school. The program allows secondary school graduation and a first level of technical training towards apprenticeship.

About SKILLS EXPLORATION 10-12

[SKILLS EXPLORATION 10-12](#) is a new course, which provides hands-on experience for Grade 10 – 12 students interested in trying different trades before enrolling in a high-school apprenticeship program (ACE IT and SSA). It’s an opportunity for students to gain new skills, explore a variety of trades in demand and get a sense of what trades is right for them.

About Youth Exploring Skills to Industry Training (YES 2 IT)

[YES 2 IT](#) is a skills exploration grant program designed to increase awareness of the trades by providing funding for projects that target younger students (grades 5-10), as well as their parents, educators and communities. School districts apply for funds to offer youth an opportunity to connect with tradespeople in their community through hands-on experiences. YES 2 IT provides hands-on opportunities for students to explore career options so they can choose a career direction based on their strengths and interests. YES 2 IT provides grants of up to \$4,000 per school district up to two times per school year. Last year, over 8,000 students experienced YES 2 IT events, and over 31 school districts accessed the grants.

About Maker Day

[Maker Day](#) is a joint initiative between ITA and UBC Okanagan’s Innovative Learning Centre that promotes incorporating ‘making’ into the classroom by encouraging invention, prototyping and experimenting through hands-on learning. It is an opportunity for educators to learn how to integrate creative problem solving and out-of-the-box thinking in their teaching, and provide their students with a fun and innovative approach to learning. There have been 11 Maker Day events this year, and three events scheduled in the New Year.