

SASKATCHEWAN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

BUILDING ON STRENGTH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fast Facts

- Saskatchewan continues to experience a shortage of skilled tradespersons
- Approximately 20% of Saskatchewan students leave school prior to completing Grade 12
- Only about 25% of Grade 12 graduates go on to post secondary education in the first two years after graduation
- The average age of apprentices in Saskatchewan is 27 years of age
- There exists a significant pool of labour in the age range of 18 to 27 that is currently underutilized in Saskatchewan

Efforts must be increased to provide more options to make secondary schooling relevant in order to better engage our youth, keep them in school and provide viable career paths to help get them into skilled employment sooner.

The Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship (SYA) Program was initiated in 2004/05 to help increase the awareness of Grades 10-12 high school students about skilled trades careers. After a two year pilot, SYA was expanded to be available to all high schools in Saskatchewan. Significant progress has been made in a short period of time. As of March 3, 2009, a total of 193 high schools are participating registered in SYA. This represents approximately one half of all high schools in the province and 9% of all Grade 10-12 students.

There is more to be done. In the fall of 2008 the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) established the Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship Program Advisory Group to guide a review of the SYA Program. The broad objectives of the review were to identify how to strengthen the SYA Program and how to expand it to all high schools throughout the province.

This review included surveying educators, students, parents/guardians, employers, industry associations and trade unions regarding their experiences and views on the SYA Program. The results of those surveys, as well as the experiences and input from SATCC SYA staff and Commission Board members, plus the Advisory Group, make up this report.

The primary conclusion is that the SYA Program is definitely addressing a gap in the area of youth awareness about skilled trades careers, but that more needs to be done. This report recommends building on the strength of the current SYA Program initiative to reach significantly more Saskatchewan youth not only through awareness initiatives, but also through credit recognition and meaningful trades related work experience opportunities. In fact, over 80% of all respondents from all groups believe that work experience should be a larger part of the SYA Program.

Recommendations in Section D are categorized into four themes:

1. Enhanced SYA Marketing Initiative
2. SYA Fine Tuning
3. School Credit and Work Experience Linkages
4. Expanded Resource Support

An action plan on these recommendations would result in a stronger, farther reaching SYA Program that would help Saskatchewan youth keep pace with youth in other Canadian jurisdictions in the preparation for skilled trades careers.

A. BACKGROUND

A long standing concern in industry has been the general perception that a career in the skilled trades is second rate compared to a university based or office career. This belief often begins in the family home and is reinforced in the school system where children are taught, for the most part, by university trained teachers.

A recent survey by Canadian Policy Research Networks: Career Development Services for Canadian Youth: Access, Adequacy and Accountability (July 2006) found that:

"students listen to non-professionals (parents, those in the community they admire, friends) when exploring different careers, but they want professional knowledge and advice (e.g., guidance counsellors) on education and work decisions."

The report also states that:

"Despite nation-wide social marketing campaigns, there is inadequate support for students wanting to pursue apprenticeships. Youth attitudes about trade careers may be shifting positively, but accessing apprenticeship programs remains daunting for most students who must secure a willing employer before being able to pursue that learning path."

The report also states:

"The main barriers to participation in the trades appear to be the perception of trades careers and limited knowledge of apprenticeship as a learning and career option."

Interviewees and focus group participants in the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum study, Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada: Perceptions and Barriers, felt that "the attitude of many guidance counsellors towards apprenticeship is often very negative, reflecting a lack of knowledge of the complexity of the work." (CAF, 2004, P 19).

If, as the report states, attitudes about trades careers are shifting positively, then more must be done in the school system to provide youth with information and opportunities to prepare for trades careers.

It was with these types of concerns and challenges in mind that the SATCC, in partnership with Saskatchewan Learning, launched the Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship (SYA) Program on a pilot basis in 2004/05 with two high schools, Thom Collegiate (Grade 9) in Regina and Assiniboia Composite (Grade 10) of the Prairie South School Division. The pilot was subsequently expanded to an additional five schools in 2005/06.

The SYA Program is a skilled trades awareness program for Grades 10, 11 and 12 students to help raise their awareness and knowledge about the potential and rewards of a skilled trades career path. Program objectives are stated as being:

- introduce apprenticeship and the trades certification process
- create awareness of apprenticeship programs and opportunities
- make connections between high school programs and skilled trades training

The entry requirements for the SYA Program are Saskatchewan secondary students who are at least 15 years of age and must meet one of the following criteria:

- experience with part time or seasonal employment
- registered in a trade-related Practical and Applied Arts (PAA) course
- registered in a trade-related locally developed course
- registered in Career and work Exploration 10, 20 or 30
- registered in a PAA survey course with at least one third trade related content.

The benefits of the SYA Program are stated as;

- get a head start on career planning
- record achievements for resumes and career portfolios
- youth registering as an apprentice in a designated trade within three years receive:
 - waiver of registration fee (currently \$150)
 - waiver of first level technical training tuition
 - 100 hours of trade time credit per SYA level completed

Building on the pilot start in 2004/05 the SYA Program was expanded to be available to all high schools starting in the school year 2006/07. Tables 1 and 2 show that just two and one half years later, as of March 3, 2009, a total of 193 high schools and 3,918 students are currently registered in the SYA Program. A total of 997 students have completed the program and, of this number, 101 youth (10.1% of SYA completers) have subsequently registered as apprentices with SATCC.

The SYA Program has grown significantly in a short period of time. However, a look at school participation indicates that there is still room for growth. Table 1 shows participation by category of school-- urban, rural, northern and First Nations. Overall, less than half (47.9%) of

the province's high schools are participating in the SYA Program. The highest participation is in northern Saskatchewan with 10 or 62.5% of the schools followed by urban centres with 46 or 53.3% of the schools, rural with 130 or 50.2% of schools and the lowest is First Nations schools with only 7 or 16.7% of schools participating. This is of particular concern, given the growing First Nations youth population in Saskatchewan.

A look at student numbers shows that the majority of registered SYA students are from urban areas with 2,322 students (59.3%), followed by rural schools with 1,106 students (28.2%), followed by northern schools with 419 students (10.7%) and lastly by First Nations schools with only 71 students or 1.8% of total SYA students. The highest proportion of SYA students to total Grades 10-12 student population by school category is found in northern Saskatchewan schools where 32.6% of all Grades 10-12 students are registered in the SYA Program. The urban and rural comparisons are 8.3% and 8.1%, respectively.

TABLE 1 SYA SCHOOL AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION (March 3/09)

	Urban	Rural	Northern	First Nations	Total
SYA Schools	46	130	10	7	193
Total Schools	86	259	16	42	403
School Part. Rate	53.3%	50.2%	62.5%	16.7%	47.9%
SYA Students	2,322	1,106	419	71	3,918
Completed	363	517	103	14	997
Apprentices	42	58	1	-	101
Gr 10-12 Students	28,316	13,704	1,284	N/A	43,124
Student Part. Rate	8.3%	8.1%	32.6%	N/A	8.9%

In the fall of 2008 the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission wanted to build on the initial success of the SYA Program. It established a Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship Program Advisory Group (See Appendix I-A for membership) to conduct a review of the SYA program in order to identify how best to strengthen and expand the program. The results of this review are presented in this report along with a number of recommendations on how to build on the success of the program's initial implementation and further assist Saskatchewan high school youth learn about and access apprenticeship opportunities while remaining in school.

B. METHODOLOGY

Early in its deliberations, the Advisory Group decided to take a "big picture" look at the SYA Program. An in depth look at the mechanics of the program had already been undertaken with high school educators before rolling it out to all high schools in 2006/07. The Advisory Group

decided to survey a range of SYA interest communities in order to identify any significant delivery challenges/barriers in the Program, plus elicit input on how to enhance the program to make it as relevant and meaningful as possible for students.

A number of survey instruments were developed for distribution to a sample of the following groups: school administrators/educators, SYA students, non SYA students, parents/guardians, employers, employer associations and trade unions. See Appendix II for each of the survey instruments and aggregated responses by group. Table 2 provides an overview of the survey distribution and responses by survey group.

In addition, input was also gathered from SATCC SYA staff and Commission Board members to obtain their insights on the current program delivery and possible future direction.

TABLE 2 SYA SURVEYS BY GROUP

	Educators	Students	Parents	Employers	Employer Associations	Unions
Surveys	280 Schools	280 Schools	110	400	6	6
Responses	111 Educators	279 Students	16	48	5	5

An analysis of these responses, together with Advisory Group members' input and a recent review by Manitoba on youth apprenticeship initiatives in other Canadian jurisdictions, forms the basis for the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report.

C. KEY FINDINGS

(i) Educator Survey Results

The Educator survey was distributed to educators attending the Saskatchewan Teachers Applied Technology Conference in Moose Jaw on November 28, 2008 and mailed to 280 secondary schools throughout the province. A total of 111 responses were received from a total of 79 schools and 10 school divisions. Of this total, 49 responses were from urban schools, 61 responses were from rural schools and 1 response was from a northern school. Unfortunately, no responses were received from First Nations schools. Any significant differences according to urban/rural/northern respondents are highlighted in the following summary of results. Seventy-four of the respondents were from schools that participate in the SYA program and thirty-seven respondents were from schools that do not participate in the SYA Program. See Appendix II (a) for the aggregated results of the Educator surveys.

The majority (81%) of respondents believe that both the academic and skilled trades career paths have equal value for students. There was a slightly higher value placed on a skilled trades career path by urban educators. The majority of respondents indicated that their school incorporates awareness of skilled trades as part of their school's curriculum or school activities in Grades 6-9 (80%) and Grades 10-12 (94%). This was higher for Grades 6-9 in urban schools at 88% than for rural schools at 77%. Both Grade groups' percentages were lower in schools not participating in the SYA program, particularly for Grades 6-9. This would indicate a lesser overall priority in those schools until at least Grades 10-12. However, it is interesting that 51% of all respondents felt that skilled trades career education should begin in Grades 6-9 while only 32% felt it should begin in Grades 10-12, while 17% felt it should begin in Grades K-5.

The survey found that 89% of the respondents were aware of the SYA Program. The awareness was slightly higher for urban educators than for rural educators. This is to be expected given the relatively short period of time that the SYA Program has been available province wide and the ease of access to urban schools for SYA staff compared to the location of rural schools. This is further reinforced by the finding that while 66% of the respondents indicated that their schools used the SYA Program, the percentage was 79% for urban respondents and only 57% for rural respondents.

Respondents who indicated that their schools used the SYA Program were asked to identify the biggest barriers to implementing the program. A total of sixty responses were provided. Twenty-five (41.7%) of the responses indicated extra workload and time required to implement and carry out the program as the biggest barrier to implementation. Fourteen of the responses (23.3%) indicated student interest or commitment as the biggest barrier. Ten of the responses (16.7%) indicated lack of administrative or teacher interest. Ten of the responses indicated no barriers and one response indicating finding a journey person as being the biggest barrier to implementing the SYA Program.

Educators were also asked to identify the biggest barriers to student participation in the SYA Program. There were fifty-nine responses to this question. Forty responses (67.8%) related to lack of student time, immediate reward, motivation or interest as the biggest barrier to student participation. This, in part, may be related to the fact that the SYA Program is extracurricular and not part of the regular high school curricula program. Some respondents indicated that they have incorporated the SYA Program into their curriculum so that students are provided with sufficient time to research and complete the SYA activities. Eleven respondents (18.6%) indicated administrative challenges such as having enough teacher time to track the students and making sure passports are complete or administrative challenges associated with the program being extra-curricular. Four responses (6.8%) related to teachers not being on board with the Program.

In response to the question, "Do you lead/guide your students through the SYA activities", 82% of respondents indicated that they do. This was slightly higher for urban respondents at 85% than for rural respondents at 79%.

When asked for recommendations for improving/strengthening the SYA Program, educators provided 29 responses. Nine responses (31%) related to simplifying the program, providing increased administrative support and removing overlap and repetition. Seven respondents (24.1%) said the program was okay the way it was. Six responses (20.1%) related to developing teacher aids (e.g., online asynchronous modules) to assist with the delivery of the program. Three responses related to increased awareness and communication about the program. Three responses related to providing more rewards such as earning high school credits to students for completing the SYA levels. Two responses related to incorporating SYA into the curriculum.

When asked if it would be useful to attend a SYA Program workshop with SYA staff from SATCC to discuss how the SYA Program could be strengthened/improved, 63% of the educator respondents said it would be useful. The response was more positive from rural educators with 23 respondents or 72% positive compared to 17 respondents or 55% of the urban educators.

An area that the Advisory Group wanted to explore was the potential for connections between the SYA Program and work experience opportunities. Ninety-six percent of the educator respondents felt that high school students should have an opportunity for work experience as part of their career education program. Eighty-three percent indicated that their school currently provides work experience opportunities for students as a part of their career education program. This consists primarily of the Career and Work Exploration program. This was higher in rural responses at 86% than in urban responses at 78%.

Sixty-one percent of respondents felt that work experience should be a larger part of the SYA Program. When asked what they thought were the top three challenges in implementing a work experience initiative, the most frequent responses were in descending order: scheduling issues, lack of instructor time and lack of employers. A look at urban and rural responses shows that the biggest challenges for urban educators are scheduling, lack of instructor time and the inability for students to receive a wage. The biggest challenges for rural educators are scheduling, lack of employers and lack of instructor time. The northern response listed lack of employers, scheduling issues and lack of student interest. These differences, no doubt, reflect the different labour market conditions by area with employers and paid part time work for students being more readily available in the urban areas.

Finally, educators were asked if they would support a K-12/industry/post-secondary partnership to provide accelerated trades training to Grades 10-12 students who are interested in a skilled trade career path. Ninety-one percent of the respondents said they would support such an initiative.

(ii) Student Survey Results

The student survey was distributed to educators attending the Saskatchewan Teachers Applied Technology Conference in Moose Jaw on November 28, 2008 for distribution to their students and it was also mailed out to 280 secondary schools in Saskatchewan. A total of 279 responses were received from a total of 28 high schools. One hundred and twenty-four of the responses

were from students participating in the SYA Program and one hundred and fifty-five responses were from students not participating in the SYA Program. On a geographic basis, 142 responses were from urban students, 136 responses were from rural students and 1 response was from a northern student. Any significant differences according to urban/rural/northern respondents will be highlighted in the following summary of results. See Appendix II (b) for the aggregated results of the Student surveys.

(a) Students Participating in SYA

Participating SYA Program students were fairly evenly distributed among the three levels of the Program with 29% at the introductory level, 20% at the intermediate level and 26% at the senior level. Twenty-five percent did not know what level they were at. Most of the students (80%) had heard about the SYA Program from their school with presentations by SATCC SYA staff, at 11%, being the second most common way they had heard about the program.

Seventy-six percent of the students were interested in a skilled trades career before participating in the SYA Program. This was slightly higher for rural students at 79% than for urban students at 75%. The interest in skilled trades careers increased to 81% once students were in the SYA Program. Most students (94%) had support from their parents/guardians regarding a possible career in the skilled trades. Only 2% did not have such support. Seventy-two percent of respondents have an interest in pursuing post-secondary education in a skilled trade while 22% are undecided. The interest is higher on the part of rural students at 78% compared to urban students at 67%.

In the area of work experience, 79% of respondents indicated that they have an opportunity to participate in a work experience of more than one day and 20% did not know. Eighty-eight percent of the students believe that work experience should be a larger part of the SYA Program. When asked if they had ever worked in a skilled trade, 58% indicated that they had with 56% indicating summer work and 43% indicating part time work. This was higher for rural students with 68% indicating they had worked in a skilled trade and only 49% of urban students indicating they had. Part time work was more prevalent for urban students and summer work was more prevalent for rural students. The skilled trades that students worked in were predominantly traditional construction and manufacturing trades with carpentry, welding and heavy duty mechanic being the top three.

Sixty-four percent of students indicated that they had enough time to complete SYA activities in class. This was higher for urban students at 67% compared to rural students at 60%. Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated that they had to do SYA activities on their own time. This was significantly higher for rural students at 76% compared to only 54% for urban students. When asked if their teacher guides them through their SYA activities, 91% indicated that they did. This was higher for urban students at 96% compared to 83% for rural students. Forty-seven percent of the students would like to do more activities in SYA levels. This was higher for urban students at 53% compared to rural students at only 40%, reflective of less class time and teacher guidance for the rural students. When asked if they thought the SYA challenges/activities were too basic, 86% of the students said they were not.

Fourteen students had recommendations on how to improve/strengthen the SYA Program. The most common recommendation was to make the program more practical with fewer questions and more hands on activities and work experiences with trades persons. The other recommendation was to provide more class time to work on SYA questions.

When asked if they would be interested in participating in an advanced trades training program beyond their current school offering as part of their regular high school credit program if offered locally, 84% said that they would be interested. Thirty-four students said that they would be interested in participating in a focus group on the SYA Program and the skilled trades.

(b) Students Not Participating in SYA

Eighty-two percent of the students who are not participating in the SYA Program are interested in learning more about skilled trades careers. This is slightly higher for rural students at 85% than for urban students at 78%. Only 68% of the students were aware of the SYA Program. This was lower for rural students at 64% compared to urban students at 72%. The biggest reasons given by rural students for not participating in the SYA Program was that the Program was not offered at their school and they were not aware of the opportunity to participate. For urban students, it was lack of time and schedule too full.

Seventy-two percent of the students have their parents/guardians support regarding the possibility of a career in the skilled trades. This is higher for rural students at 84% compared to urban students at 55% and 38% unknown. It should be noted that the parent/guardian support is significantly higher for students in the SYA Program at 94% than it is for students not in the program at 72%. This would seem to indicate that the SYA Program is also helping to increase the awareness of parents/guardians about careers in the skilled trades.

When asked if they had an interest in pursuing post-secondary education in a skilled trade area, only 53% indicated they did while 33% were undecided. This compares to 76% and 22% for students who are in the SYA Program indicating that the Program is achieving its objective of making connections between high school and skilled trades training.

Only 45% of students indicated that they had or will have an opportunity to participate in a work experience as part of their career education program with 46% indicating that they did not know. This compares with 79% and 20% for students participating in the SYA Program. However, 86% of the students believe that work experience should be a larger part of their high school program, similar to the response for participating SYA students. As well, 79% of the students indicated that they would be interested in participating in an advanced trades training program beyond their current school offering as part of their regular high school credit program if available locally. The rural interest, at 83% of the students, is higher than the urban interest at 74% of the students.

A total of 66 students expressed an interest in participating in a focus group to express their views on the SYA Program and opportunities in the skilled trades. Forty-two or 63.6% of these students are rural students.

(iii) Parent/Guardian Survey Results

A total of sixteen responses were received to a random mail-out of 110 surveys to parents/guardians of SYA students throughout the province. See Appendix II (c) for the aggregated results of the Parent/Guardian surveys.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents were aware of the SYA Program prior to receiving the survey. The most common positive comment that they heard from their children about the SYA Program is that it assists them in helping to make a career choice and expedites entry into the workforce. There was no one most negative comment they heard about the SYA Program from their children. Negative comments ranged from the teacher not promoting the program to wondering where the student will find an apprenticeship or placement in their field/trade of choice to limited areas for females to one day job shadowing does not really give a clear understanding of what the trade actually involves. It is interesting to note that most of the negative comments relate to limitations/concerns about work and career opportunities.

All 16 respondents felt that the SYA Program can make a difference in a high school students' awareness and interest in skilled trades careers. Sixty-three percent of the respondents felt that students should be introduced to skilled trades careers in Grades 10-12. Only 31% thought that it should be introduced in Grades 6-9. Ninety-four percent of the respondents felt that both academic and skilled trades career paths have equal value.

In the area of work experience, 94% of the respondents believe that work experience should be a larger part of the SYA Program. Further to that, 87% would support their high school participating in an accelerated skilled trades training program as part of the regular credit program for high school students interested in a career in the skilled trades if available locally.

(iv) Employer Survey Results

A total of 48 responses were received from a mail-out of 400 surveys to randomly selected employers that employed apprentices. As well, 5 responses were received from employer associations whose members employ apprentices. The 48 replies from individual employers represent a cross section of industry sectors-- resource, manufacturing, automobile dealers, construction, retail and service. The five employer association respondents were:

- Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada
- Regina and District Chamber of Commerce
- Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association
- Saskatchewan Automobile Dealers Association
- Saskatchewan Construction Association

The two groups have been aggregated in this analysis. Any significant differences are commented on below. The separate results can be found in Appendix II (d).

In response to the question at what grade level do you feel skilled trades career education should begin, 57% indicated Grades 10-12 and 43% indicated Grades 6-9. Employer association responses had a higher percentage in favour of Grades 6-9 at 60%. Prior to this survey, only 49% of individual employer respondents were aware of the SYA Program while 60% of employer association respondents were aware of it.

The majority (77%) of respondents did not know that some credit time is granted for participation in the SYA Program and that Apprenticeship Registration fees, as well as first year tuition fees for technical training are waived. Only 6% of employers had apprentices who have gone through the SYA Program while 32% did not know. This is not surprising given the relatively recent implementation of the SYA Program.

Respondents were asked about challenges and opportunities associated with other approaches to increasing students' awareness about skilled trades careers such as:

- work experience opportunities with employers
- journeyperson visits to schools
- class visits to work sites
- job fairs
- parent and student awareness sessions

There was strong interest in work experience as a good way to increase student awareness about the skilled trades. This was couched with caution/concern about the time required to organize such opportunities as well as ensuring the safety of students. The other approach that received good support was parent awareness sessions as it is recognized that parents have an influence on high school student career interest choices. Ninety-six percent of the respondents believed that there would be support in their companies for the range of skilled trades career awareness approaches.

Recommendations for improving/strengthening the SYA Program focused on increasing the awareness about the realities of the jobs in the workplace, increasing employer awareness, and doing a good job of screening/matching student interest with apprenticeship employment/trade opportunities. Ninety-eight percent felt that a work experience opportunity would strengthen the SYA Program. The most support was expressed for summer work (47%) and afternoons (2 hours/day) over a three month period (43%). The least support was for 1-2 hours (8%) and one day (13%). The benefits to the students do not justify the organizational effort required to arrange these short exposures to work experience.

Respondents were asked what they believed the biggest challenge would be in implementing a work experience program for high school students at a work site. The most frequently cited challenges were related to ensuring the safety of the students, ensuring meaningful work experiences and the time needed to coordinate the right mentors and job opportunities.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents indicated that their company/industry would be interested in participating in a province-wide accelerated trades and skills training initiative which would include a work experience program as part of the high school credit program for high school students interested in pursuing careers in the skilled trades. The most frequently cited ways that respondents thought their participation in the SYA Program could occur were to provide work experiences (60%), provide advice on local high demand trades (45%) and class visits to work sites (42%).

(v) Trade Union Survey Results

A total of five responses were received from trade unions representing workers employed as skilled trades persons in Saskatchewan. They were:

- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- Saskatchewan Building Trades
- Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Apprenticeship Committee
- Saskatchewan Government Employees Union

See Appendix II (e) for the aggregated results of the Trade Union surveys.

Sixty percent of the respondents felt that skilled trades career education should begin in Grades 6-9. This was the same as the employer association respondents. Sixty percent were not aware of the SYA Program prior to the survey and 80% did not know that some credit time is granted for participation in SYA and that Apprenticeship Registration Fees, as well as first year tuition fees for technical training are waived. Sixty percent of the respondents stated that they had no apprentices who had gone through the SYA Program and 40% did not know. Again, this is to be expected given the relatively recent start of the SYA Program.

On the question of different approaches to increasing student awareness about skilled trades careers, there was good support for work experience opportunities as long as student safety was a priority. All of the respondents believed that there would be support in their companies/industries for a variety of approaches to increasing student awareness about skilled trades careers.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents felt that a work experience opportunity would strengthen the SYA Program. The highest support was for summer work (6 weeks) experience at 40%. The main recommendation for increasing/strengthening the SYA Program was to use government facilities--crown corporations and departments-- to provide work experience opportunities. The biggest challenge in implementing a work experience program for high school students was identified as student safety.

When asked if their companies/organizations would be interested in participating in a province-wide accelerated trades and skills training initiative which would include a work experience program as part of the high school credit program for high school students interested in pursuing careers in the skilled trades, 67% responded positively. When asked how their

companies/organizations would be able to participate in the SYA Program, the highest support was for advice on local curriculum and participation on local industry/education advisory committees.

D. CONCLUSION

The SYA Program was initiated in 2004/05 as a pilot project and only became a province-wide initiative in 2006/07. In just two and one half years, this skilled trades awareness initiative has grown to include almost 50% of all the high schools throughout Saskatchewan and 9% of the Grades 10-12 students. It receives positive comments regarding its success in helping to fill a gap in the province's high school skilled trades awareness program. Positive recognition comes from educators, students, parents/guardians, employers and trade unions alike. There is much strength in the SYA Program to build on to enhance its attractiveness and effectiveness for students and educators as it continues to expand to more and more schools and students.

Survey results and input from SYA staff, Commission Board members and the Advisory Group point to four major areas of recommendation for action for the SYA Program:

(i) Enhanced Marketing of the SYA Program- to educators, students, parents and employers to increase awareness and participation.

(ii) SYA Program Fine Tuning- to make the program more educator friendly and student effective.

(iii) School Credit and Work Experience Linkages- to provide students with increased incentives/rewards for SYA participation and options for practical hands-on experience in the work place

(iv) Expanded Resource Support - to ensure full SYA Program implementation in all Saskatchewan high schools

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) Enhanced Marketing of the SYA Program

Significant progress in implementing the SYA Program has been made in a short period of time thanks to the combined efforts of all partners. Much remains to be done. Only one half of the urban and rural high schools are registered with the SYA Program. Only 17% of the First Nations high schools are registered. Only about 9% of all Grades 10-12 students are enrolled in the program. Eighty-two percent of the student respondents who are not in the SYA Program are interested in learning more about skilled trades careers. The biggest reason for rural student respondents not participating in the SYA Program is that it was not offered at their school. Only 49% of employers were aware of the SYA Program prior to the survey and 77% were not aware

of the trade time credit and fees reduction benefits of the Program.

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission should implement a SYA Program specific promotion campaign with a goal to register all high schools, including First Nations high schools, by 2011/12. This specific promotion campaign could include a variety of communication modes such as face book promotion, YouTube, screentest, Relevance magazine, billboard advertising, "reality TV" DVDs for teachers and students showing tradespersons at work, promotional items related to the trades (e.g., SYA tape measures) and targeted school and student group presentations.

Special targeted efforts should be made with rural and First Nations schools. Eighty-five percent of rural student respondents who are not participating in the SYA Program are interested in learning more about skilled trades careers. Only 64% were aware of the SYA Program before the survey and the biggest reason offered for not participating was that it was not offered by their school. The biggest reasons for urban student respondents not participating was lack of time and full schedules. There are only 71 students registered in the SYA Program from First Nations schools. There is a latent pool of future skilled trades workers in rural and First Nations schools that must be addressed.

An approach similar to that which has been done in northern Saskatchewan should be considered where the SYA Program has been promoted through broadband broadcasting in partnership with the Keewatin Career Development Corporation. Sixty-two percent of northern high schools are participating in the SYA Program. Strategic targeted marketing efforts should be directed at forums/gatherings of rural and First Nations educators, guidance counsellors and students. The use of distance education via E-learning technologies should be considered as a means to reach smaller schools that have no resources to implement the SYA Program.

A specific SYA Program awareness effort could also be directed at employers and trade unions to increase their knowledge and support for the program and its benefits. Fifty and sixty percent of the employer and trade union respondents, respectively, did not know about the SYA Program prior to the survey. By working with employer associations, chambers of commerce and trade unions, SYA information could be distributed through regular newsletters and forums to reach as many workplace partners as possible. This is particularly important related to work experience linkages recommendations below.

(ii) SYA Program Fine Tuning

For the most part, the SYA Program is well received and supported by the users--educators and students. There are, however, areas that the survey respondents identified for improvement. The major barrier to program implementation and student participation was the time required to implement and complete the program on the part of both educators and students. Educators called for some program and administration simplification, as well as removal of some duplication. They also identified the development of teacher aids as something that would be helpful for all schools. The area of student rewards for progressing through and completing the SYA Program was cited as another consideration for strengthening the Program. Students

identified the need to make the SYA Program more practical and hands on.

The SYA Program should be fine tuned to make it even more attractive and effective in increasing the awareness and interest in skilled trades careers. Workshops with educators and students could be held to determine adjustments in program content and administration that would assist educators to deliver and students to complete more efficiently and effectively. The survey responses indicated that 40 educators, 34 SYA participating students and 66 non SYA participating students would be willing to be part of such an exercise. A special effort should be made to involve First Nations educators and students in this as well. This may require a separate workshop.

Such workshops could result in a streamlined SYA Passport Book, SYA Program administration best practices guide and teacher aid manual to share with all schools to assist with SYA start up and delivery. The above workshops would contribute to the development of such tools and already participating schools could be called upon to lend their SYA implementation experience and local systems as part of a work team to finalize these tools.

Other fine tuning suggestions include collecting statistics on SYA participants by gender and making special efforts to encourage young females to consider trades careers. Discussions with Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technologies could prove beneficial in this area.

It was also suggested that the length of SYA completion eligibility for program benefits be extended from the current three years to at least five years. This is in recognition that some youth take longer to determine their eventual career path. This is evident in the case of apprentices where the average age is currently 27 years of age.

(iii) School Credit and Work Experience Linkages

The current skilled trade career path in the school system is largely extra curricular and focused on the awareness component with little emphasis on trades training and work experiences. It consists of the new Grades 6-9 Career Education Curriculum which is much broader than the skilled trades, the Skilled Trades Careers Unit of Grade 9 Career Guidance and the extra curricular SYA Program. Opportunities for practical work experience are currently available through the elective, Career and Work Exploration PAA program. This may or may not be linked with the SYA Program. Depending on the school, there may also be some specific trades training courses that will provide some practical hands on exposure to a trade. This is mostly limited to comprehensive high schools and hence, access for most Saskatchewan high school students is non existent. The degree of work experience opportunities is often directly related to whether or not a school has a champion who is committed to developing innovative approaches with employers in their community.

There is an opportunity to better link the SYA Program with high school credit recognition, trades training and work experience options for those students who are inclined towards a skilled trades career. It is interesting to note that the SYA program receives recognition for apprenticeship time but no credit recognition towards high school requirements. Caution must

be exercised that work experience options do not limit SYA participation (e.g., lack of employers in rural and northern Saskatchewan) but encourage more work experience opportunities through private employer, community and public work sites.

Approaches by other Canadian jurisdictions to youth apprenticeship programs could be considered for possible application in this province. The recent Manitoba report (See Appendix I-B), Senior Years Apprenticeship Option (SYAO) Program Evaluation Report, found that nine (including Manitoba) of ten jurisdictions currently offer on the job work experiences as part of a youth apprenticeship program in their high schools. Seven of these nine jurisdictions offer high school credits for hours involved and work experience in the program. Eight of the nine jurisdictions currently offering on the job work experience require that students receive compensation for hours worked. Saskatchewan stands out as the only jurisdiction that does not have a program or system of high school credits in place to support on the job work experience.

The SYA Program could be made a curriculum requirement for all students taking PAA shop classes. This approach has been employed by a number of high schools with success. It provides students with more incentive, reward and regular class time to complete SYA activities than would otherwise be possible. These are areas of improvement called for by students and educators alike.

A compendium of work experience approaches currently in place throughout the province could be developed as a first step towards establishing a SYA work experience program. Good examples of successful practices in this area include the Carlton Comprehensive High School /Prince Albert Construction Association Student Apprenticeship program (SAP) and the Saskatoon and District Industry-Education Council Summer Youth Internship Program. See Appendix I-C for a description of these work experience initiatives. Such a compendium would assist in transferring good practices in work experience approaches within current Education Act regulations among all schools. There is strong support for providing work experience opportunities as part of the SYA Program, from 61% of responding educators to 88% of responding students to 98% of employers.

In the area of trades training the Regina and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre model could be considered for application in all other major Saskatchewan centres. This model provides accelerated trades training opportunities for high school students who otherwise would not be able to access such hands on training. The trades training provides high school credits, post-secondary recognition, apprenticeship recognition and links with employers for future jobs (summer and permanent) and potential career paths. The Regina and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centres are operated by partnerships of local school divisions, post-secondary training institutions, industry and community leaders. This model could be adopted/adapted in other urban centres via partnerships between regional colleges, local school divisions and industry. The training opportunities could be provided by using a combination of regional college and comprehensive high school facilities.

A closer link between the SYA Program and the Regina and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centres could also be established with unemployed and underemployed young adults in training. An integral part of this training is workplace essential skills which prepares the trainees for expected

workplace performance. The SYA Program could be better linked to the Trades and Skills Centres by drawing from the SYA Program to offer an apprenticeship awareness element as part of the essential workplace skills training to the young adults in the job entry trades training who have not been part of the SYA Program.

(iv) Expanded Resource Support

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission provides the provincial promotion and central administration for the SYA Program. A relatively small staff of four persons is responsible for promoting, supporting educators, tracking students and linking SYA graduates with the formal apprenticeship system. A significant implementation of the program has been achieved in a short period of time.

The target of expanding the SYA Program to all high schools is ambitious and could require extra dedicated effort on the part of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and school divisions. It will require, in particular, increased efforts at the school level to register, assist and track students' progress. The recommendation to increase work experience opportunities for SYA Program students will require dedicated resources to make employer contacts, establish appropriate work experience matches for students and employers and conduct follow-up.

The enhancement and expansion of the SYA program would be greatly aided through the provision of dedicated funding to each school division to hire a youth apprenticeship coordinator to support the SYA Program and establish work experience opportunities for SYA students. Failing this, stipends should be provided at the school level to educators and administrators to encourage them to undertake the extra work required to implement the SYA Program. As well, a dedicated SATCC resource for First Nations SYA promotion and support would be beneficial given the very low participation of First Nations schools in the SYA program.

Finally, an upgrade of SATCC's internal SYA data base capability would be important to support the expanding SYA Program participation. The challenges of recording and tracking the increased numbers of schools and students over the next two years could be carried out more efficiently and effectively if more sophisticated software, other than the current Excel spreadsheet system, were available. This may also present an opportunity for online submissions by schools throughout the province.

F. APPENDICES

(i) Appendix I-A: SYA Program Advisory Group Members

Doug Folk, Chair
Saskatchewan Construction Association

Janet Uchacz-Hart
Saskatoon & District Industry-Education Council

Gord Heidel
Community netWORKS Regina

Donavon Elliott
Prince Albert- SK Skills Canada Chair

Calvin Racette
Aboriginal Education Coordinator
Regina Public Schools

Greg Lawrence
Practical and Applied Arts coordinator
Saskatchewan Education

Darcy Cherney
Institutions Analyst
Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour

Caithlin McArton
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Apprenticeship Manitoba

Rennie Zabolotney
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Loreena LaPlante
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Lillie Wong
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Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade certification Commission

Wayne McElree
Consultant

(ii) Appendix I-B: Manitoba Report Excerpt

**Report of Findings
Program Evaluation
Senior Years Apprenticeship Option (SYAO)**

**Presented to:
Manitoba Competitiveness, Training and Trade,
Apprenticeship Branch**



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SENIOR YEARS APPRENTICESHIP OPTION (SYAO) PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

10.0 OTHER PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION EXPERIENCE

Secondary research was collected for nine provincial jurisdictions that have youth apprenticeship programs, including:

- British Columbia (BC)
- Alberta (AB)
- Ontario (ON)
- Nova Scotia (NS)
- New Brunswick (NB)
- Prince Edward Island (PEI)
- Northwest Territories (NWT)
- Yukon (YT)

Interviews were conducted with representatives from three provinces to determine the program details, process, effectiveness, and challenges experienced by youth apprenticeship programs in other respective jurisdictions.

The three interviews were conducted with the following representatives:

- British Columbia– Secondary School Apprenticeship (BC SSA), Program Coordinator
- Saskatchewan – Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship (SK SYA), Program Manager
- Alberta – Registered Apprenticeship Program (AB RAP), Program Coordinator

For illustrative purposes, summary descriptions and comparative apprenticeship data for nine provinces and territories is provided in Appendix F. The following section identifies findings related to credits and work experience, training, wages, unique features and incentives, and challenges/barriers from interviews conducted with BC, SK, and AB.

CREDITS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Youth apprenticeship programs across jurisdictions are designed to build awareness and increase participation in trade occupations to meet the current and future labour force demand. Of the nine jurisdictions, eight currently offer on-the-job work experience as part of the youth apprenticeship program administered. Of the eight programs, six offer high school credits for hours involvement and work experience in their program.

The BC SSA and AB RAP have paid on-the-job work experience with the ability to earn high school credits as follows:

- BC SSA: 16 credits to meet 80 credit requirement for high school diploma;



SENIOR YEARS APPRENTICESHIP OPTION (SYAO) PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

- AB RAP: 40 high school credits, with only 15 credits useable to meet 100 credit requirement for high school diploma.

Currently the SK SYA does not have systems in place to support on-the-job work experience as part of the program. Students visit a work site as the last part of the program, without reward of high school credits.

TRAINING

Of the nine jurisdictions, five have components of in-class training, with the focus on health, safety, and general trade information. One jurisdiction, Ontario, offers components of in-class technical training as part of their youth apprenticeship program.

Technical classroom training is not required as part of the BC SSA, AB RAP, or SK SYA. Students registered in the BC SSA and AB RAP are required to complete in-school orientation/training, health and safety, and general knowledge training prior to becoming enrolled or part of the program.

In February, 2005 the B.C. government piloted an industry training initiative, Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training (ACE IT) to provide pre-college industry training to high school students. This program is operated separately from the BC SSA program. Optional Level 1 Apprenticeship Technical training for apprenticeable occupations is delivered by ACE IT and can be in partnership with the SSA program. There are approximately 375 students simultaneously enrolled in the SSA and ACE IT program. Schools receive \$2000 funding intended for coordinating the program.

The AB RAP program is currently considering alternative options and timelines for when students may begin technical training while enrolled in RAP. In particular, consideration in the development of technical training modules through the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) courses may shift career and technical training to the responsibilities of schools.

WAGES

Of the eight currently offering on-the-job work experience, seven require that students receive compensation for hours worked. There is no work experience portion to the SK SYA program in order to receive wages. Employers in British Columbia and Alberta are required to compensate students at least at minimum wage.

Though the BC SSA and AB RAP do not mandate that wages be paid at apprenticeship levels or above minimum wage, a majority of employers have been compensating students above the minimum wage requirement to adjust for labour market demands. In union situations, all employers are required to follow the collective agreement for pay scales, and apply the same scales to students, unless coordinated otherwise through the union. The BC government has never had legislation or regulations in place to mandate wages of BC SSA apprenticeship students.

In the past the AB RAP mandated wages similar to SYAO, at first year Apprentice levels, however administrators of the program removed the regulation as employers, school administrators, and the program coordinator viewed it as barrier and too cumbersome to enforce. Pressure from employers that were not prepared to assume the cost associated with mandated wages influenced the decision to remove the regulation. It was identified that provincial wage legislation did not impact the decision or present complications as Alberta Apprenticeship and Alberta

SENIOR YEARS APPRENTICESHIP OPTION (SYAO) PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Education were in partnership, with the establishment of an 'off-campus' policy that recognized BC SSA participants as students first, and apprenticeship employees second.

With the removal of the wage requirements the program experienced an estimated increase of double the interest and participation from employers. The program did not experience a decline of students registered in the program.

UNIQUE FEATURES AND INCENTIVES

Incentives are designed by program administrators to facilitate successes in the mission and vision of provincial youth apprenticeship programs, and to increase awareness, interest, and registration in apprenticeable trade occupations as a career choice.

The BC SSA and AB RAP provide scholarship opportunities for students that complete their respective programs, as follows:

- BC SSA: Students that complete 480 hours of on-the-job training and achieve a C+ average, and are still pursuing their apprenticeship training six months after graduation are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship. The program awarded approximately \$475,000 in 2006.
- AB RAP: Students are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship; mandating that \$700 awarded in the first years of apprenticeship training and the remaining \$300 in the second year of continued apprenticeship training. The program awarded approximately \$300,000 in 2006.

SK SYA students registering as an apprentice within three years of the program will have their registration fee and first level of technical training tuition waived as well as 100 hours of trade time credit per SK SYA level completed.

The BC SSA, AB RAP, and SK SYA do not offer incentives to employers or educational institutions for involvement in their respective programs. The BC SSA removed grant funding to educational institutions for each participating student in 2002. This resulted in a decrease of student participation from 1,200 to 800. Participation has since normalized.

National and provincial tax incentives for employers in all trade programs involved in technical training are available.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

Similar challenges and barriers are being faced in regards to program administration, awareness, and perception across jurisdictions in Canada. The common barriers across programs are:

- A lack of information and understanding of apprenticeship and trades in Canada, "status" of a trade as an occupation;
- Concerns regarding the basic skills and maturity of students;
- Concerns regarding technical understanding of students;
- Concerns regarding the legislation of wages;



SENIOR YEARS APPRENTICESHIP OPTION (SYAO) PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

- Limited resources to manage and promote programs; and
- Concerns regarding on-site work safety from trade union.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in the three programs has been identified as highly successful and effective in increasing awareness and participation in trade occupations. The following is a summary of participation information identified by the BC SSA, and AB RAP compared to SYAO participation data. The SK SYA, currently in the second year of operation, has not reported participation data.

TABLE 10-1 COMPARISON OF PROVINCIAL HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

	MB SYAO	BC SSA	AB RAP
Active Student Participants	516	2,083	1,400
Overall Students	1,178	-	8,000
Employers/Sponsors	833	10,120	n/a
Certified	57	n/a	1,000
Retention into Apprenticeship Training	291	n/a	1,800
Scholarships Awarded	-	\$475,000	\$300,000

The following population statistics are provided to give context to the figures above.

TABLE 10-2 PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH POPULATION

	British Columbia	Alberta	Manitoba
Youth Population Aged 15-19	273,560	237,900	83,825
Student Participants	2,083	1,400	516
Participation per 1000 Youth	7.6	5.9	6.2

The youth populations of BC and Alberta are significantly larger than the youth population of Manitoba, which skews the direct comparison of the participation levels. As such a per 1000 student comparison is more telling. On this basis, B.C. appears to be achieving the highest level of participation, with Manitoba and Alberta achieving reasonably similar levels.

(iii) Appendix I-C: Work Experience Approaches

Appendix I-C (a) Prince Albert Construction Association Student Apprenticeship Program

1. Work Exploration 30A&B

At Carlton we offer several options for our students to take Work Exploration. The program that has the Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship as part of it has the students doing the following:

- Before students can take the Apprenticeship Work Experience program they need two letters of reference. One being from their PAA teacher and the other from who ever they may choose.
- A current resume will also be needed when applying to get into the program.
- Also a letter outlining why they want to be in this program.
- Once students are accepted into the program the students usually go out in the afternoons to work. Hours are arranged by the employer, student and the school. Usually the student will start at 1:00 in the afternoon and goes till 5:00pm.
- Students need to attend their work placement every day.
- Students can be discontinued from program if expectations are not met.
- At the end of the semester the students need to present a final portfolio with all the assignments completed.

Assignments:

1. Completed hours of work agreement signed off by the journey person they are working with.
2. A final evaluation form that is completed by their employer.
3. A final covering letter applying for an apprenticeship position.
4. A final up to date resume with their work experience added to the resume.
5. Explore 5 different apprenticeship careers and to do a write up on each. The students will also do in-class presentation throughout the year on these careers.
6. The student will attend a career fair and explore 3 different career options. They will do a written report on each and insert.
7. The students will complete a WHIMS assignment and insert.
8. The students will complete a Recognizing Hazard Module and insert.
9. The students will complete a Guide for New Workers Module and insert.
10. The students will complete the CSTS safety course.
11. The students will complete the SYA modules and insert.

Since students will be working with a journey person on their job placement all working hours go towards their apprenticeship hours.

Students who complete program could have up to 500 hours towards their apprenticeship hours when finished high school. (300 hours from PAA courses and 200 Hours from this program)

2. Prince Albert Construction Association Student Apprenticeship Program (SAP)

This is a partnership between the construction association and the high schools in the Prince Albert area. To enter the program students have to completed grade 11 and be registered for grade 12. This program has run for several years and has about 75% of the students that completed this program will go into a construction area.

Qualifications to enter program:

1. Completed a grade 11 PAA course.
2. Two letters of reference, one coming from their PAA teacher.
3. Complete the registration package.
4. Supply a current resume.
5. Go through the CSTS safety program before going to the job placement.

Students will work through out the summer at a paid position. They are all expected to return to high school and finish their grade 12 once program if over. The students are interviewed at the end of the program and again the following year to see where their career path is heading. Once finished high school a number of these students go back to their summer placement to start their apprenticeship program.

Students that finish the SAP program then come back to Carlton to finish their grade 12 and enter the Work Experience program and complete 3 levels of PAA in a designated area could leave high school with 1000 hours of apprenticeship time.

3. Students Challenging their Level One Exam

This program is being offered through out Saskatchewan. Students that have taken all three Levels of a PAA course that has been taught by a qualified person may challenge the level one exam in that area. If the student succeeds in this exam they will not have to attend post secondary training school till their second year of their apprenticeship.

For more information about these programs contact Donavon Elliott at Carlton Comprehensive High School.

Appendix I-C (b) Saskatoon and District Industry-Education Council Youth Summer Internship

SASKATOON AND DISTRICT INDUSTRY-EDUCATION COUNCIL



602 Lenore Drive
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 6A6
Phone: 683-7774 Fax: 657-3949
E-mail: uchacz-hartj@spsd.sk.ca

YOUTH SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Saskatoon and District Industry-Education Council (IEC) is a partnership between three local school divisions and regional business/industry. A board of directors representing industry, education, and business organizations governs the IEC. Our vision is to create a community of shared responsibility; preparing youth for quality careers. Industry and Education collaborate and focus resources supporting youth to make SMART (Students Moving Ahead with Real-World Training) career-life decisions.

The Summer Youth Internship program is a project that the IEC is pleased to deliver to the youth of our schools again this year. This program, now in its fifth year, provides youth with a look at the trades and providing them with summer employment at the same time. The internship started between **July 2 - 7** depending upon safety course completion and ends on **August 15, 2008** (or longer if agreed upon with employer-intern). We are partnering with the Construction Sector in Saskatoon to deliver career exploration opportunities, which make learning about this sector engaging, informative and relevant.

Positions are available in the areas of **electrical, steel fabrication, welding, carpentry, drywalling, plumbing, roofing, masonry, electronics assembler and mechanics**. We currently have 2 Grade 10 students, 25 Grade 11 students and have 22 students who have recently graduated from Grade 12. We have 25 companies involved in this year's program. It is the objective of the program for interested students in the trades to explore various opportunities available to them in the hopes of continuing in the trades as a viable career choice. Participants will be asked to keep a log of all activities and time recorded in order to gain apprenticeship hours. We ask employers to act as mentors in providing a look into what the construction industry is all about and allowing students to see all aspects of the trades. Youth are also evaluated both half way and at the end of the program. Each student is enrolled in the Youth Apprenticeship Program and will work towards completion of the three levels.

Also, once hired, youth complete the Construction Safety Training Systems program through the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association free of charge. All students will have to have this safety training before commencement of their internship. Many of these companies will also do on-site safety orientation as well.

The IEC has hired two job coaches who are monitoring the interns progress and will also act as a support for both employer and employee throughout the internship. These two positions are funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, Service Canada and Industry Canada.

FuturePaths Website: www.futurepaths.ca will also be a source of information. Any additional questions can be directed to Janet Uchacz-Hart at 683-7774.