

For Immediate Release

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Student participation in skilled trades training earns Kootenay-Columbia SD20 award from Industry Training Authority

Students are engaged, focused, and happy during their skills development

Trail – Kootenay-Columbia School District No. 20 has received the Industry Training Authority (ITA) Youth Work in Trades Performance Award for the highest number of students in trades training in their region.

“Congratulations to Kootenay-Columbia School District for partnering with the ITA in order to deliver the highest standard of trades training to students in the region,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. “Our government is helping support B.C. youth in every corner of the province to explore dynamic career opportunities in the trades while also acquiring their high school credentials. I am so proud of all the young people who are pushing the envelope and finding their passion in the trades. As Minister, I sincerely believe that a Red Seal certification is just as valuable as a degree.”

ITA’s Chief Executive Officer Shelley Gray thanked all partners for helping students on a path to success. “The Kootenay-Columbia School District, teachers, and employers in the program are providing students with crucial hands-on experience that is required for their apprenticeship training.”

“I love to tinker, build, and fix. I was born to be in heavy duty,” said Colby Benesh, who graduated this year. “I finished school and two weeks later moved to Cranbrook to be an apprentice with Brandtt Tractor. Most my friends are either not working or trying to figure stuff out. I’ll make over \$50k this year—not bad for 18!”

The award includes \$5,000 in additional funding to assist the district to further develop their [Youth Work in Trades](#) program. Seven other school districts received a Youth Work in Trades Performance Award.

“Over the last 22 years of working with career and trades training, I have seen so many lives bettered by ITA programs. Young men and women are able to start meaningful careers that lead to incredible lives. Well-paid secure work, which is rare in this world,” said Murray McConnachie, Trades Coordinator, SD20. “Within the current COVID pandemic, our students are still being hired and retained in record numbers. While many face uncertainty our Youth in Trades programs are flourishing. Whether students are looking for a fast track to a well-paid career, a path to follow a passion, or a way to pay for other education, there is no better course.”

About the Industry Training Authority (ITA)

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia's skilled trades system. ITA works with apprentices, employers, industry, labour, training providers and government to fund training, issue credentials, support apprenticeships, set program standards, and increase opportunities in the trades. For more information, visit itabc.ca.

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