

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2018AEST0082-001190  
June 15, 2018

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

### **New tools help high school students jump-start trades careers**

COURTENAY – British Columbia high school students are getting a taste of the trades, and the chance to explore new career paths, thanks to new equipment funding.

School districts throughout the province will receive \$3.5 million this year to buy new equipment to upgrade trades classrooms and workshops.

“Today’s high school students will be the engine driving B.C.’s economy into the future,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. “I’m thrilled that government is helping them get early exposure to training for rewarding and good-paying trades careers.”

Fifty-eight school districts will receive funding this year through the Industry Training Authority’s (ITA’s) Youth Trades Capital Equipment Program. This will allow them to buy modern equipment that improves safety in the classroom, and ensures students are learning on the most up-to-date technology.

Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA for Courtenay-Comox, made the announcement at Georges P. Vanier Secondary school, in the Comox Valley School District. The district has received \$178,782 over the last three years, including \$26,262 this year, to buy equipment that gives students a chance to build skills required in the workplace, and experience different trades. Worn-out table saws and drill presses have been replaced, and cutting-edge, computerized wood machines and plasma torches have been purchased.

“ITA youth initiatives have breathed new life into old shops, and helped shop teachers continue to encourage students to work with their hands and their heads,” said Randy Grey, careers program co-ordinator for Comox Valley School District. “We are seeing more students each year identifying that a trade is a great way to get a head start in life.”

Graduates have gone on to work in industries including construction, with some currently working on seismic upgrades at the school.

“We’re giving students the tools they need to succeed, and kick-starting successful careers in trades,” said Leonard. “I’m so pleased to see some of them working right here in our hometown.”

Examples of how funding will be spent this year include buying saws with features to prevent injuries to fingers at Chilliwack School District, and allowing all grade 7–9 students at Kamloops/Thompson School District to experience applied skills, design and technologies. It will also allow Coast Mountains School District to purchase a van that will bring tools and training to students in distant communities.

“The apprentices and tradespeople that build the communities in which we thrive are invaluable,” said Gary Herman, chief executive officer of the ITA. “That’s why funding programs that equip students with the tools they need to explore and gain skills in skilled trades are so important to B.C.’s future.”

ITA leads and co-ordinates B.C.’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.

**Learn More:**

ITA: [www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca)

Read more about the ITA Youth Trades Capital Equipment Program, and see the funding amounts by district:

[https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/ITA\\_youth\\_trades\\_equipment\\_funding\\_brings\\_training\\_to\\_students.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/ITA_youth_trades_equipment_funding_brings_training_to_students.pdf)

**Contacts:**

Rodney Porter  
Communications Director  
Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and  
Training  
250 952-6508

Susan Kirk  
Director of Communications  
Industry Training Authority  
skirk@itabc.ca  
778 785-2410  
604 315-9959

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)