



ICUBED SUMMIT

School District 91, Nechako



FACTS



Population: 37,896

Location: Bulkley-Nechako Regional District

YOUTH TECH & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Growing the Next Generation in Rural B.C.

Where does innovation come from? We've all heard about the exciting, fast-paced culture of tech startups, or admired the business savvy of burgeoning entrepreneurs we see on television.

Often we paint the picture that innovation happens in big cities, but in reality it can happen anywhere. Nechako Lakes School District in north-central B.C. is actively supporting its students to become part of the next generation of entrepreneurs and technologists.

BUILDING A STRATEGY

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Cubed

Nechako Lakes School District has a rich history of developing and implementing local projects.

In October 2017, Nechako Lakes School District held iCubed, a tech and entrepreneurship summit for secondary and elementary students. The event featured speakers, exhibitions and activities that showcased the possibilities of entrepreneurship and innovation for students and encouraged them to consider career opportunities that weren't yet on their radar. More than 160 participants attended in-person or by live-stream.

The event was supported by Young Entrepreneur Leadership Launchpad (YELL) Canada, a registered charity that supports entrepreneurial thinking in young minds, and the Innovation Central Society, a non-profit dedicated to helping the region's technology sector grow and thrive.



ICUBED SUMMIT

Events of the Day

- The keynote speaker was Georgiy Sekretaryuk, a 19-year-old entrepreneur and ambassador for the Young Entrepreneur Leadership Launchpad, who inspired youth with his experiences starting a business.
- A panel of entrepreneurs from northern B.C. and the Lower Mainland showed students they don't have to leave the North to pursue innovative new technologies and ideas.
- Thirteen industries showcased products, technologies and innovations from northern B.C. so youth could see tangible examples of innovative technologies, such as a zero-energy hydraulic pump, drone supported and sustainable agriculture practices, and the school district's own flight simulator and Lego robotics display.
- Students completed an ideation challenge to spark their entrepreneurial thinking, teamwork, ideation processes and generate new ideas about how to use a common tool.



For more information: gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment



PARTNERSHIPS

Launching Youth Through Collaboration

The summit marked the launch of School District 91's entrepreneurship course in partnership with the Young Entrepreneur Leadership Launchpad. The course pairs students with mentors from the local business community to develop and pitch a business idea in an inter-district venture challenge. The course also helps students develop entrepreneurial thinking and skills to support launching their own business ideas or the next step of their careers.

Funding support came from the Ministry of Education and the Northern Development Initiative Trust Shoulder Tappers program. The Shoulder Tappers program works within school districts in northern B.C. to point students in the right direction with greater mentorship and positive career input and has helped Nechako Lakes School District create many new initiatives and extra regional partnerships.

By nurturing the next generation to pursue business opportunities and new ideas in B.C.'s North, local businesses can help keep youth in the community and grow its long-term economic development future.

Over the long-term, Saxena hopes to create a network of school district alumni with successful business ventures to inspire and support students as mentors. With "motive brings energy" as a guiding theme, they will continue to create accessibility for youth in rural and remote communities similar to those in bigger B.C. centres so rural communities can flourish and retain young talent.



TAKING THE LONG VIEW Investing in the Next Generation

For co-organizer Sagar Saxena, entrepreneur and community engagement and partnerships officer with School District 91, the event spread enthusiasm for entrepreneurship and challenged students to think differently about their career possibilities. It also invited local industries and businesses to invest in the next generation of youth innovators in the community.

LOOKING AHEAD Building on Success

In coming years, organizers hope to expand the event to include other rural communities in northern B.C. and to get even more support from local industries and entrepreneurs to mentor and invest in the youth of their community.

Additionally, the attendance of city councillors and economic development officers from the area helped demonstrate their commitment to young minds and pull together a support system for future entrepreneurs – something they'll build on for the next summit.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information: gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment

