



Mark Marino

District Career Supervisor
Vice Principal A.L. Fortune Secondary (Enderby)
SD# 83 (North Okanagan Shuswap)
<http://career.sd83.bc.ca>
6021 Students

Mark Marino says that Career Programs in School District #83 is a team effort. Each secondary school has a career programs coordinator, career clerk and a supportive administrative team. Support for the programs also comes from the Board of Trustees and Central Staff who genuinely believe in dual credit opportunities.

The program now has a wealth of partners that have been established over the years. Post Secondary partners include: Okanagan College, Thompson Rivers University, BCIT, VCC, Camosun College, and Vancouver Island University. Other partners include the Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) such as ATSO and Go2. The community partners are too numerous to mention but include: local municipalities, small to large businesses in our region, and local media —especially the radio station where Mark is regular guest promoting the Career Programs in the district.

Mark has experienced some challenges growing the Career Programs in his district. As a result of not being located in a big centre with a direct bus route to a PSI, the district has had to tap into other resources as well as PSIs outside the district to provide training opportunities for students. Another problem has been declining enrollment. “We have lost a lot of students over the past few years. As a result, we have to be flexible and look for new ways to pursue trades training. This may include hybrid classes (ACE IT and non-ACE IT blends) and more online/blended learning models,” says Mark.

To overcome the barriers, SD 83 has put money towards supporting designated programs. The district has invested over \$400,000 in programs such as Automotive Repairer and Collision Technician, Automotive Service Technician, and Cosmetology.

What does the future look like for career programs in SD 83? SSA opportunities have been created with the maintenance staff in the district, and discussions are ongoing with the other large unionized employers. More ITA designated training opportunities for students will be explored, such as offering ACE IT programs with industry partners and utilizing the skills of the current School District staff.

Mark advises this: “Districts wanting to start a career program should really take the time to talk to districts that have an established system. While one-size doesn't fit all, new districts can pick and choose what they want from their conversations. The career group in the province is very supportive and is always willing to share their experiences.”