



Randy Grey

Career Programs Coordinator
School District 71 (Comox Valley)

<http://careers.sd71.bc.ca/>

7000 students

In 2008, the School District 71 District Superintendent created Randy Grey's position as Career Programs Coordinator to oversee shop teachers, Work Experience and start up some ACE IT programs. At the start of the Career Coordinator position, a district Work Experience review was implemented. It was undertaken after some thorough research was done on best practices from other districts around the province.

The programs were initially funded out of general revenue, but recently Randy has devised a per-block funding model as the best way to fund career programs. "I think this is very important because dual credit, ACE IT and career programs are growing in districts while general funding is decreasing due to declining enrollment", Randy says. One program Randy feels is pivotal in creating a vibrant careers program is Grad Transitions. It provides most of the necessary funding to set up Career departments and serves the students well.

The SD 71 Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent have recognized the need to allow the career department to explore and create new opportunities for students. Randy states that, "having people at the top who support 'Intrapreneurial' initiatives, where new programs are supported through existing funding structures, is important. For example, running Work Experience through a Distance Learning school allows three funding windows, instead of the September 1701 funding for bricks and mortar schools." In Randy's opinion, this funding better serves students and staffing.

Getting the right people for the different jobs in the Career Centre was very important. Randy believes that making sure that good job descriptions are set up at the beginning, and including CUPE staffing, is a key. One of the strong points for SD 71 is the Work Experience Coordinators/Program Workers. These employees are focused on careers and work experience, and are full-time employees. Having these CUPE positions filled with very capable people, is why the career and skills program is so successful.

What is Randy most proud of? "We have grown the trades opportunities for students in our schools. When a student can get ITA recognition, or a dual credit and university transfer credit—that means something to students. We continue to work as a team, are all very enthusiastic about career education, and want to get more of our fellow teachers working with us."