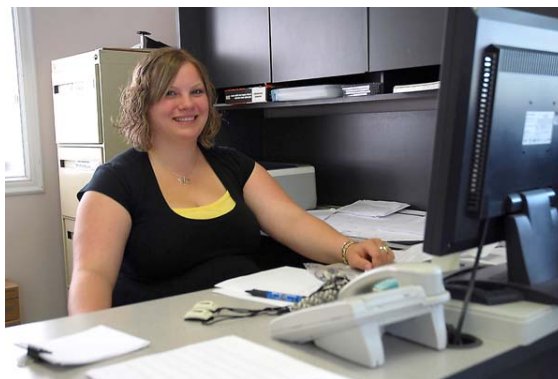


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Dual Credit Opportunities for Applied Business Students**

### **North Island College and SD 71 Sign Agreement**

Another exciting partnership between North Island College and School District No. 71 will benefit students considering office-related careers. Signed recently by North Island College President, Dr. Jan Lindsay, and School District No. 71 Superintendent, Dr. Jordan Tinney, the letter of understanding between the two organizations outlines a new dual-credit program in Applied Business Technology (ABT).



As the new semester begins, so does the pilot program which allows high school students in the Comox Valley to take online courses in ABT from North Island College. The courses will earn them both high school graduation credit and credit towards a post secondary credential. What's more, it will prepare them for a career in an office setting. Positions that are open to graduates of the Applied Business Technology program include receptionist, general clerk and office assistant.

In the first phase of the program, a student takes three courses, earning 3.5 college credits and 4 Grade 12 credits. The first three courses are: Online Learner Success; Introductory Keyboarding; and Introduction to Computers and the Internet. Those who successfully complete this step can enter phase two. Here, a student earns an additional 3.5 college and 4 Grade 12 credits. After finishing phase two, completing an Office Assistant I Certification requires just 6 more credits. A graduate of this certificate can then choose to enter specialty programs at NIC such as Medical Office Assistant or Legal Administrative Assistant.

Port McNeil and Port Alberni have already had students engage in this program with success. "The students have been progressing well," remarks Bob Thompson, Student

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Transitions Coordinator for NIC and its School District partners. “Faculty report that the high school students are fitting in well with their online cohorts.”

This dual-credit program contributes to school completion through student engagement. Students work towards both high school and post-secondary credits, bringing them closer to graduation, and leading directly towards a transferable credential. Further to this, students are able to take pre-requisite courses concurrently. A benefit of this is that students can see the direct application of their studies. “We find that dual credit programs help students to see the relevance of their course work,” notes Thompson. “No longer is it just theory. They see how the math lesson fits in the workplace. They begin to understand why written language is so important.”

Dual credit programs are open to any student 19 years and under. A potential candidate does not have to be presently enrolled in high school. The online nature of the courses means that there is significant flexibility. This may allow students with other responsibilities such as a job or small children the opportunity to participate.

There are additional benefits to this program beyond dual credit. Students in the program gain important experience in online education – which is fast becoming an essential life skill. Successful students may also gain the confidence that college is a real possibility for them, thus helping them to make informed career training choices for the future.

If you, or a student you know, might benefit from this program, you may access more information on both the North Island Partnership website [www.northislandpartnership.ca](http://www.northislandpartnership.ca) and the North Island College site [www.nic.bc.ca](http://www.nic.bc.ca). You may also contact Co-ordinator, Bob Thompson directly at [northislandpartnership@shaw.ca](mailto:northislandpartnership@shaw.ca).

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