

## **SUBJECT: Supporting Expansion of Saskatchewan Industry Education Councils**

**SUBMITTED BY: Youth, Education, and Training Committee**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Saskatoon Industry Education Council (SIEC) is a non-profit organization working with three school divisions (Saskatoon Public, Greater Saskatoon Catholic and Prairie Spirit), the Saskatoon Tribal Council, community based organizations, government agencies, business associations, and employers to provide career development and exploration opportunities for youth. A Board of Directors representing business, education and organizations governs the SIEC. Its vision is to create a community of shared responsibility, preparing youth for quality careers. The role of SIEC is to be “a career information conduit between students and employers.” The SIEC currently runs over 31 events and programs developed for youth in Grades 7–12. In 2013, an industry education council was formed in Regina, with that group undertaking similar initiatives in Regina and area.

Through research conducted in 2010, SIEC identified three programs that were viewed by most school divisions as highly desirable additions to the career development process. These included: an online career exploration tool connecting youth to potential careers and jobs in all industries across the province; experiential learning opportunities that give students an opportunity to see first-hand what careers and educational opportunities may be available to them; and a summer youth internship program that provides students with employment during the summer months, and a chance to experience work in the construction, manufacturing, automotive and tourism sectors.

With participating employers and employees, SIEC’s objective for such program development has been to benefit students through access to real-world, real-time information about careers in their region of Saskatchewan and to benefit employers through the development of a current and future workforce.

In 2011 the SIEC began seeking government support for the provincial expansion of programs. Much work has been done to gather support from school divisions, business development organizations, and employers. In 2014, the SIEC is taking the lead on developing [www.saskcareers.ca](http://www.saskcareers.ca), the province’s online career development website.

### **ISSUE**

SIEC’s research in 2011 indicated serious labour shortages as an issue affecting many Saskatchewan businesses. In survey results from economic groups, First Nations, and businesses, 92% of respondents indicated there is a need for improved information for high school students about careers available in each region and 97% of respondents

had heard employers in their area talking about both short and long term shortages of labour.

The SCC is equally aware that development organizations, education systems, government, and private and public sector business have a significant interest in labour force development. Two major accomplishments can be achieved by supporting provincial expansion of the IEC's: career opportunities will be communicated to students (local, regional, and provincial), and employers will be able to access the workforce they require.

The strategy that evolves from this will include all key stakeholders, including; the school divisions, employers and, business and development organizations. Provincial and regional industry education councils could organize and carry out these objectives through initiatives such as, but not limited to: [www.saskcareers.ca](http://www.saskcareers.ca), Spotlight on Careers and the Summer Youth Internship Program.

### **RECOMMENDED**

- 1) That the Government of Saskatchewan expand IEC programming from a regional to a provincial level by supporting expansion of industry education council service delivery to all regions throughout the province.
- 2) That the programming be offered on a provincial basis divided up into six regions, that there be regional Advisory Boards who guide the process in each region, and that each region have two staff persons to carry out the functions of program management and provide direct program support services while building the level of support from the school system, the employer community and the development groups in their region.
- 3) That the program be co-ordinated and led on a provincial basis by a Board of Directors selected from the regional Advisory Boards, and managed by a staff that focuses on building the provincial network, providing selected services to all provincial participants and providing support services to each of the six regions.
- 4) That the funding for the provincial program be provided by the following government agencies: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education, Ministry of the Economy, Western Diversification, and supplemented through investment of private and public sector employers.
- 5) That the Government of Saskatchewan support regional IEC's continued delivery and participation in programming such as: [www.saskcareers.ca](http://www.saskcareers.ca), provincial and regionally developed programs and events, in collaboration with schools divisions and Tribal Councils programs and offerings.
- 6) That the Government of Saskatchewan expand the number of services available to employers and encourage the involvement of employers from many sectors in IEC

initiatives such as: [www.saskcareers.ca](http://www.saskcareers.ca), industry and education partnerships, localized programming and events, and Summer Youth Internship Program.