



## SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73 (KAMLOOPS/THOMPSON)

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### NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
DigiPen ProjectFUN  
Initiative  
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School District # 73 Kamloops

#### **DigiPen ProjectFUN Initiative to be Introduced in Grades 8 through 12**

KAMLOOPS: School District # 73 announces today that it has entered into an agreement with the DigiPen Institute of Technology, located in Redmond Washington, and the world leader in video game design and production education, to introduce its award winning ProjectFUN Initiative to students in grades 8 through 12, and laddering to Thomson Rivers University's Computing Science Department.

The ProjectFUN Initiative are a series of courses that use video game design and 3D animation to teach students advanced aptitude in mathematics and the sciences, art, and computing science. The program was developed by DigiPen at the request of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington State to address the decline in student aptitude in core subjects and the falling rate of student interest in these subjects in post-secondary education. The State, despite its considerable high tech sector, was finding alarmingly low enrolment in degree programs to fuel its work force requirements.

The result was the development of middle and high school programs using video games – something students are interested in - as a motivator and a venue to teach advanced mathematics, physics, geometry, the arts and computing science. These programs which are now deployed widely in Washington will now be provided at Sa-Hali Secondary School and open to all students in the District in grades 8 through 12.

Starting in fall 2011, students in grades 8 and 9 will be invited to enrol in the Junior Game Developer workshops, and video game programming level 1 and 3D animation level 1. Students in grade 10 invited to enrol in video game programming levels 1 and 2, and 3D Animation levels 1 and 2. Students in grade 11 will be invited to enrol in video game programming level 2 and 3D Animation level 2. Video game programming and 3D Animation level 2 serve as the pre-requisites for the Technology Academy available to grade 12's, which is an intense 540 hour program where students develop advanced video games and animation reels, and develop high aptitude in math, science, art and digital art.

The DigiPen ProjectFUN courses in grades 10 and 11 earn students 4 credits when completing the combined video game programming level 1 and 3D animation level 1, and similarly when completing the combined video game programming level 2 and 3D animation level.

Students graduating the Technology Academy receive 16 credits toward graduation also earn advanced credit in up to four 1<sup>st</sup> year University courses in the Thompson Rivers University Computing Science Department or at the DigiPen Redmond or Singapore campuses.

All students completing DigiPen ProjectFUN courses have developed a video game or 3D animation reel that they can play at home with friends and family on their PC. Students completing the Tech Academy will have created games using the same programming language as those playable on Microsoft X-box consoles.

The Kamloops School district is offering students an early opportunity to attend the DigiPen ProjectFUN courses by offering summer workshops in summer 2010 and 2011- with registration for curriculum based courses starting in spring, 2011. This summer, students are able to enrol in the 60 hour, two week workshops at Sa-Hali Secondary School as follows:

- Junior Game Design Workshop 1: ages 10 to 12 - July 5th to July 16th
- Video Game Programming Level 1: ages 13 and up - July 19th to July 30th
- 3D Animation Level 1: ages 13 and up - August 3rd to August 13th

The District wishes to point out to parents that while students will have creative fun developing their own projects, these courses have met with high success in Washington State where they were developed to address declining student grades in core math and science courses.

The Entertainment Software Association of Canada has urged the Federal government to: "...coordinate with provincial governments a plan to incorporate digital literacy into children's school curricula. It agrees with the Information Technology Association of Canada that: 'We need more children taking math, science and technology education streams and more grads in related disciplines with the right package of education. ', and 'The talent pool will feed the entertainment software industry, expected to grow by 29% over the next two years, only if Canadians are better educated in disciplines like science, technology and art.'" (Vancouver Sun, Business Section, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010).

The joint effort by the Kamloops School District and DigiPen's ProjectFUN Initiative bring this exact focus to Kamloops, from the proven leader in the field. Through this initiative, the Kamloops School District will introduce a comprehensive continuum of advanced education curriculum.

The Kamloops School District will also coordinate the availability of ProjectFUN Initiative courses to other school districts in the province who wish to offer these unique programs to promote the academic success of their students.

**About DigiPen:** The DigiPen Institute of Technology is the world leader, and the longest serving educational institution serving the video game and animation industries. It works closely with Nintendo, Microsoft, Ubisoft and many other industry leaders. Its simulation technology is used by Boeing, the world's largest aircraft producer to test its aircraft prior to production. Boeing awarded DigiPen as its number one supplier of technology from 10,800 suppliers' world wide. DigiPen students are in high demand in the video game and programming industries. Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine recently ranked DigiPen as the best school in the world to study game development.

**About School District # 73:** Kamloops: School District # 73 serves the communities of Kamloops, Barriere, Logan Lake, Chase, Savona, Clearwater, Westwold, and Blue River. It has an international and distance education capability and supports the highest achievement of its students and all levels of the K to 12 secondary school system.

For more information, please contact:

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