



# News Release

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## **NMCC graduates play increasingly important role in SAD 1 delivery of education**

**Aroostook County** - Northern Maine's largest school district is increasingly turning to graduates of the County's Community College (particularly from the business technology department) for instructional staff in its regional technical center and to support its information technology infrastructure.

A recent survey of teaching staff at SAD 1's Presque Isle Regional Career and Technical Center shows that one-third of the faculty are graduates of Northern Maine Community College or one of its forerunners. The team responsible for coordinating and maintaining the school district's vast technology infrastructure is even more populated by NMCC alumni – two-thirds of the department's staff earned degrees from the Presque Isle College.

"There are several benefits of having graduates from our local community college," said Larry Fox, director of the PIRCTC. "Since most of our students who attend a community college choose to attend NMCC, their instructors here are intimately familiar with NMCC's programs and staff. These teachers also tend to be native to the County and plan to make a long-term commitment to the area."

One of these instructors is Amy White, PIRCTC business teacher and a 1999 graduate of NMCC's medical office administration program. White began working in the school district seven years ago as a technician. She is now teaching in the same classroom that she took classes in as a student at Presque Isle High School.

"My education at NMCC was invaluable. I use so much on an every day basis," said White. "In teaching my classes I feel that I have an edge because I know what is offered at NMCC and where my students need to be to be successful at the Community College. One of the biggest things that I take from my experience at NMCC is that an education at a community college can take you places that you would never expect. I would definitely not be where I am today without my NMCC experience."

White credits her success in large part to the faculty and staff at NMCC, particularly Ann Osgood and Paula York, who teach in the office administration programs. She also acknowledges the campus environment that is fostered by instructors, administrators, and staff who "genuinely care about the success of their students."

“It is always gratifying to see our graduates succeed,” said Osgood. “It is also rewarding to see the impact they have in businesses and organizations throughout our region. The positive contribution of our business department alumni at SAD 1 mirrors the experience of numerous other employers in our region.”

In addition to White, NMCC business department graduate Erin Argraves serves on the instructional staff as an applied life science and natural resources teacher. Argraves is a 1998 NMCC graduate.

Cameron Adams, who earned an associate degree in drafting from NMCC in 1993, serves as PIRCTC drafting technology instructor.

The instructional technology White, Argraves, Adams and their district-wide colleagues use on a daily basis is largely supported by fellow NMCC alumni. Three of the five staff members in the SAD 1 technology staff all earned associate degrees from the Community College.

“Technology changes daily in a business environment and school districts are no exception. Our teachers work with the students in very many different ways and technology is a daily added means to this process. Students, teachers, staff, and administration rely on the network, hardware, and software to be functioning effectively at all times,” said Sherry Johnston, SAD 1 technology coordinator. “These three graduates help fulfill these needs along with always searching for better, more efficient ways to improve our systems. They not only came to us with the necessary skills to maintain our systems but also the ability to research issues and areas unfamiliar to them.”

According to Johnston, whenever a position opens on the information technology staff, NMCC is contacted for recommendations. The staff members she has hired to date are “well prepared and independent, while working well with others.”

One of those individuals is Angel Cray, a 2000 graduate of NMCC’s information technology program and the school district database manager.

“The knowledge and hands-on experience I received from NMCC have helped me become the person I am today. The overall experience has made me successful in my career as well,” said Cray.

Working side-by-side with Cray are Carl Saucier, a 1996 graduate of the Community College computer electronics program, who serves as a computer/network technician; and Jason Belanger, a 2004 computer electronics program graduate, who serves as the laptop technician for SAD 1.

“They have their areas of expertise and interact effectively as a team to accomplish the best outcome for SAD 1. There are so many areas of technology; and when combined with this caliber of the NMCC graduates, another asset is generated,” said Johnston.



Northern Maine Community College graduates working for SAD 1 in the area of information technology and at the Presque Isle Regional Career and Technical Center are (left to right) Jason Belanger, Carl Saucier and Angel Cray, who comprise two-thirds of the district's technology staff, and Amy White, Erin Argraves and Cameron Adams, who comprise one-third of the instructional staff at PIRCTC.