

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

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Subject: SHSM Launch at St. Michael CHS
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Specialist High Skills Major: Environment – Partnerships Grow Success

Kemptville, ON – The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM): Environment Program has now been officially launched at St. Michael Catholic High School in Kemptville. A presentation marking the occasion was held at the school on Friday, May 16, 2008.

The specialized program is a community partnered initiative supported by the Ministry of Education, Ferguson Forest Centre, The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Algonquin College and the University of Guelph.

St. Michael Principal, Terri Brady, explained that the program is a specialized environment program lead by the school, in association with local employers and partners. “These partnerships allow us to offer hands-on experience for our students. There are many cooperative education, additional apprenticeship, and workplace, college, and university educational opportunities for our students to choose from.”

Those who attended the launch had the opportunity to see the program in action as several students had prepared demonstrations and a tour was offered of the school’s greenhouse facility. Board Chair, Ron Eamer, said seeing the demos and greenhouse offers proof the program is working. “It’s great to see what our students are actually doing in these programs. The first hand knowledge they are gaining is so incredibly valuable; I am quite impressed by the work they are doing.”

St. Michael SHSM student, Alex Bradburn, said the program has opened many doors for her, “I know that through this course, I’ve been given opportunities that I would never have had without it. I think giving students the opportunity to focus on an area of study, such as the environment, forestry, or agriculture while still in high school, gives us an incredible amount of help and experience as we continue on with our education.”

Participating students also have the opportunity to explore the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and various post secondary educational opportunities. CDSBEO Supervising Principal of Student Success, Sheila Farris, stated, “The program is tailor made for our

students. It meets their specific learning needs, while preparing them for a post secondary or work employment environment. It gets them excited about their future prospects, which is just wonderful to see.”

Program partner, Martha Bradburn of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority said the program fills a much needed hole in the workforce. “Through the Specialist High Skills Major: Environment program, students are being exposed to career opportunities that may never have occurred to them. We have enjoyed having the students come to work with us and help to broaden their scope of employment opportunities.”

CDSBEO has three other SHSM Programs that are currently underway: SHSM Construction Technology, Notre Dame CHS, Carleton Place; SHSM Transportation Technology, St. Francis Xavier CHS, Hammond; SHSM Transportation Technology, St. Joseph’s CSS, Cornwall.

Director of Education, Bill Gartland, said the program is about working with students. “This program is a perfect fit for so many of our students. We have already seen students moving on to the workforce in our SHSM programs, and it is a joy to celebrate their successes with them. I very much look forward to the expansion of this program to other schools next year.”

For more information, please contact CDSBEO Communications Officer Bob Perreault at 613-258-7757 or 1-800-443-4562 ext. 206 or 613-859-0678 (mobile).

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 40 elementary and 10 secondary schools across 8 counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 15,000 students.

Attached Photos:

SHSM1 .jpg – St. Michael CHS Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) students Stephanie Ralko, Katrina Loggie and Alex Bradburn were among those pleased to share their experiences with guests at the official launch of the SHSM: Environment program



SHSM2 .jpg – Guests tour the greenhouse facility at the launch of the Specialist High Skills Major: Environment program at St. Michael CHS, in Kemptville

