

NEWS RELEASE

Page 1 of 2

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Subject: Lighthouse Funding

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CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD OF
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Lighthouse Program Shines on Two CDSBEO Schools

Kemptville, ON – The provincial **Lighthouse** rural school-funding program is shining its light on two **CDSBEO** secondary schools.

St. Francis Xavier Catholic High School in Hammond and **St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School** in Russell received a combined total of **\$160,600**.

Students will now have access to new learning resources and material under the program, which is designed to enhance the viability of rural schools and help retain rural students.

CDSBEO Supervising Principal of the Student Success Initiative Sheila Farris explained the program, "The 'Lighthouse' program, or Rural Transportation Technology program is a multi-credit technology package. It includes three courses for workplace, college and apprenticeship pathways. The program partners with local rural industry service sectors and agricultural enterprises to connect what students learn in school with what they will do in the workplace, and supports further post-secondary training."

St. Francis Xavier CHS Principal Sergio Coccia is excited about the possibilities. "It will give our students who come from farming communities an opportunity to gain hands on experience with farming equipment and machinery, while creating a wonderful partnership with local farmers that will develop into cooperative education placements, which could develop into apprenticeships."

This experience will prepare students for post-secondary education through partnerships with **St. Lawrence College** and **Kemptville Agriculture College**.

St. Francis Xavier will use its funding to purchase farming equipment and machinery. The school will also upgrade its present automotive facility to accommodate the new equipment and machinery. Teaching resources will also be purchased to help advance the program.

Mr. Coccia also said, "It's a very popular program so we are now accepting new registrations. Anyone who is interested in pursuing this pathway should call the school student services department at (613) 487-2913 as soon as possible."

St. Thomas Aquinas Principal Richard James is also looking forward to expanding his school's programs, "Our staff and particularly our student success team are thrilled with this ministry initiative. We have a number of students at St. Thomas that will benefit directly from this funding as many of them live in our rural agricultural communities."

The new funding will be used to expand and upgrade **St. Thomas Aquinas'** existing transportation technology program with a focus on a variety of small engine projects.

Mr. James added "Our staff truly believes that this additional support will help open the doors of opportunities for our students in agricultural sectors. We're very thankful for the work of Sheila Farris and the Board's executive council for their support with the Lighthouse project."

CDSBEO Director of Education Ann Perron said that the Board is pleased the province is funding Agricultural programs and is pleased with the resulting additional resources and learning experiences offered.

"In giving students the opportunity to work, meet and learn from partners in the community, we are reinforcing learning at school and encouraging the consideration of additional career options and pathways," said **Ms. Perron**. "We are optimistic that the Ministry will sustain continued support and sustain these programs for all rural students who could benefit from the experience."

Province-wide, \$10 million is being invested in the program. The initiative is part of the Liberal government's rural student success strategy, which aims to ensure that all students receive a good outcome from their high school education.

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 10 high schools and 41 elementary schools across 8 counties. **The CDSBEO** offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 15,000 students.

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