

# **NEWS RELEASE FROM THE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO**

**Date: September 12, 2008**  
**Subject: SHSM Major Expansion**  
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## **Specialist High Skills Major Program Expands Throughout CDSBEO Secondary Schools**

**Kemptonville, ON** – The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is pleased to announce that the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program has expanded to a total of eight Secondary Schools across the Board.

The SHSM is an exciting learning opportunity for secondary students. The specialized program is a community-partnered initiative supported by the local business sector, local colleges and universities and community partners. The SHSM program offers preparatory knowledge, skills, certifications, “reach-ahead”, and “on the job” learning opportunities in several specific areas of learning. Participating students will have opportunities to explore the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and various School-College-Work initiatives.

Students will also receive training and certifications in several program and job-specific requirements, including such things as, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), standard first aid and CPR, fall arrest, and customer service training among many others.

CDSBEO Supervising Principal of Student Success, Sheila Farris, said the program has been very well received. “It’s not only the students who are appreciating the wonderful opportunities they receive through the SHSM program, but our partners are so very pleased with the effort that the students are putting in to be successful.”

Board Chair, Ronald Eamer said the partnerships are a key to the program’s success. “Our partners – the colleges, the universities, and the local businesses – do all they can do to help ensure students in our SHSM programs receive the best possible instruction and opportunities. For that we are so very grateful. Without them, the SHSM programs would not be possible.”

Director of Education, Bill Gartland, said, “The students who have had the opportunity to be a part of the SHSM program in our pilot programs tell us how important this opportunity is for them. Thanks to the SHSM program, our students are experiencing success in school and the world of work. For many, it has solidified their plans for future opportunities in work, college or university.”

CDSBEO piloted four SHSM programs during the 2007-2008 school year:

**Construction – Notre Dame CHS, Carleton Place**

**Environment – St. Michael CHS, Kemptville**

**Transportation– St. Francis Xavier CHS, Hammond; St. Joseph’s CSS, Cornwall**

The SHSM has been expanded for the 2008-2009 school year to include the following programs:

**Arts and Culture – St. Mary CHS, Brockville; Holy Trinity CSS, Cornwall**

**Health and Wellness – St. John CHS, Perth; Notre Dame CHS, Carleton Place**

**Environment – St. Thomas Aquinas CHS, Russell**

Formal launch events are being planned for the new programs and information will be made available to the media as plans are confirmed.

### **Overview of SHSM Programs Offered in CDSBEO Schools:**

#### **Arts and Culture**

Creativity and idea exploration are at the root of this SHSM program. Methods used include the writing, production and staging of theatrical plays, creating paintings and composing music. Students also learn how to promote their work. Partnerships allow students to gain experience while working on actual productions and in promotional fields.

#### **Construction**

This program allows students to literally build their education from the ground up. Many aspects of the construction industry are explored and valuable certifications that permit students to gain valuable on the job training are earned. Participants learn how to construct a building from the planning stages through the completion of the project. Partnerships can, and have, led to long-term employment for students completing work placements.

#### **Environment**

The preservation of our planet is explored in the Environment SHSM program. Preservation methods are examined and students study how air, water and land quality can be improved. They also learn about helping to preserve natural habitats for wildlife and forests. Modern methods of recycling and *green-thinking* are also explored, and students study plant life through the use of greenhouses on school property. Partnerships allow students to work in conservation areas, witnessing first-hand the efforts put forth by environmental experts.

#### **Health and Wellness**

Overall health of oneself and of others is studied in this SHSM program. Students learn how to improve health through many facets of life, including fitness and nutrition. First aid and in-depth studies of human anatomy are explored to give students a better understanding of what is needed to help improve overall health for society. Through partnerships, students see the effects the health industry has on the community’s quality of life.

#### **Transportation**

Through hands-on experience, students learn the operation, maintenance and repair of

engines and motors in common vehicles. Partnerships allow students to work on actual customer, city and county vehicles alongside experienced mechanics, while gaining certifications that will allow them to further their work experience at an accelerated pace.

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.