



PRESS RELEASE

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada)
204-78 George Street, Ottawa ON K1N 5W1
437-747-0449

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Education Leaders Convene in Ontario and PEI to Explore National Co-curricular Strategy for Youth Development

[Charlottetown, PEI / Toronto, ON]— In a pivotal moment for Canadian education, senior leaders from across the sector are coming together in Prince Edward Island and Toronto to shape the future of learning through a co-curricular lens. Senior school board officials, Ministry of Education representatives, principals and vice-principals, equity and student success leads, experiential learning leads, and postsecondary leaders in skilled trades and technology will be in attendance. These forums, hosted by The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada, spotlight a growing national movement to integrate meaningful, skills-focused experiences into the heart of public education.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to Attend Both Events

Underscoring the importance of these conversations, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh will attend both the PEI and Toronto events in his role as Chair of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation. His presence highlights the global significance of Canada's efforts to lead in education innovation and youth development.

Reimagining Student Success Through Experiential Learning

The Award's co-curricular initiative reimagines how young people develop essential life competencies—such as resilience, leadership, independence, and civic engagement—by aligning experiential learning opportunities with existing school structures. This approach strengthens school communities, supports well-being, and prepares youth for a rapidly changing world.

With education authorities and stakeholders from across Canada participating in the dialogue, the forums offer a platform to share insights, elevate student voice, and chart a path forward for co-curricular recognition in secondary schools. These gatherings are designed not just as consultations, but as working sessions that will directly inform the continued expansion of the Award's co-curricular delivery model across the country.

Regional Spotlights: PEI and Ontario Gatherings

The Atlantic Canada Education Forum in Charlottetown, PEI, on June 26, 2025 will bring together senior education leaders from the Atlantic provinces to explore how co-curricular learning—through the globally recognized Duke of Edinburgh's Award—can complement provincial education priorities. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Newfoundland and Labrador will also be recognized and celebrated as the region's first Education Operating Partner.

The Ontario Education Leadership Gathering in Toronto, ON, on July 2, 2025, brings together public education leaders from across the province to spotlight how The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is being purposefully integrated into public school systems to support student-centred, experiential learning for all. Hosted in the presence of His Royal Highness, the event will showcase early successes from Ontario-based pilots and explore strategies to expand equitable access to the Award across urban, rural, and underserved school communities.

With a focus on real-world skill-building—including pathways linked to trades, community service, and cultural engagement—the Award is helping schools recognize and celebrate the diverse strengths of today's learners. The Greater Essex County District School Board will also be formally recognized as Ontario's first Education Operating Partner. Senior officials from a leading Ontario college will also be in attendance, as we are exploring a Women in Trades Pilot with them. This initiative aims to empower and support women in skilled trades and aligns with national priorities such as the Women in Red Seal Trades program.

“There's growing momentum among school boards, ministries of education, and educators who see the value in recognizing a broader range of student growth and achievement,” says Trudy Carlisle, Senior Director of Program at Award Canada. “Integrating the Award as a co-curricular offering within public education allows more young people to be recognized for their development—especially those whose strengths may not always be visible through academics alone.”

A Framework for Equitable, Skills-Based Education

Backed by international research, the Award framework helps schools address real challenges: improving student engagement, building career readiness, and ensuring every young person has access to enriching, developmentally appropriate experiences.

These education forums reflect Award Canada's commitment to collaborative, youth-centred education transformation—where academic success and personal development go hand in hand.

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About Award Canada:

*The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada) is the national operator of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, a global framework that supports youth development leading to international accreditation. With guidance from adult mentors, each young person is encouraged to challenge themselves, identify and leverage their interests, abilities, and ambitions, then set personal goals in four areas: **skill, physical and mental health, community involvement, and teamwork**. The Award provides fun and motivation by empowering student voice and engagement, enabling them to undertake experiences that build character, personal belief, and lifelong skills.*

We exist to equip every young person in Canada, regardless of background or life circumstance, with the necessary skills and experience to succeed in life. Whoever they are, wherever they come from, and whatever they define as success, the Award helps young people develop essential skills that only come through experience. We have been supporting youth in Canada for over 60 years, transforming the lives of over 500,000 young people from all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. Globally, the Award operates in over 130 countries, engaging 1.3 million participants.

Media Contact:

Aida Abader
Director, Marketing & Communications
Award Canada
media@dukeofed.org
www.dukeofed.org