

PRESS RELEASE

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh Participates in Canadian Education Events Supporting Youth Development and Experiential Learning

[Charlottetown, PEI / Toronto, ON]— As part of his broader visit to Canada, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, participated in two key education events hosted by Award Canada, underscoring his ongoing commitment to youth development and experiential learning.

In his role as Chairman of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, The Duke joined education leaders, and community partners at the Atlantic Canada Education Forum in Charlottetown and the Ontario Education Leadership Gathering in Toronto. The Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, also attended the Ontario event, lending her distinguished support to the province's commitment to youth development. Their presence brought global and provincial visibility to a growing national effort to embed the Award into public education systems through a strategic Co-curricular Approach.

“These partnerships speak to the core of our strategy,” said Amy Langhorne, Chair of Award Canada. “Across the country, education leaders are embracing a shared vision of student success—one that goes beyond academics to include purpose, employability, and well-being. Their commitment is bringing the Award into schools not as something extra, but as something essential.”

A Strategic Shift in Canadian Education

The Co-curricular Approach represents a deliberate evolution in how the Award is delivered in Canada—moving from extracurricular, independently licensed models to a scalable, inclusive framework integrated within public education. This shift aligns with provincial goals around student well-being, career readiness, equity, and whole-student development.

At both events, education leaders shared how the Award is being used to:

- Support Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs and skilled trades pathways
- Enhance student reflection, goal-setting, and resilience
- Expand access to underserved, multilingual, and equity-deserving communities
- Build bridges between secondary and postsecondary education

Prince Edward Island – Atlantic Canada Education Forum:

In Prince Edward Island, the Atlantic Canada Education Forum brought together senior officials and education leaders from across the region for a solutions-focused dialogue on advancing youth development through public education. Framed as a conversation at the intersection of vision and action, the forum explored how the Award's Co-curricular Approach can help redefine student success—focusing not just on what students know, but who they are becoming. Participants

emphasized the importance of aligning the Award with regional priorities such as equity, student well-being, and life readiness.

Key highlights included:

- A roundtable on “Unlocking Access and Advancing Equity,” emphasizing the Award’s role in supporting underserved and multilingual learners.
- A showcase of Newfoundland and Labrador’s province-wide pilot, including use in Careers education, functional curriculum, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing portfolios.
- Strong cross-provincial engagement around embedding the Award within existing system frameworks—not as an add-on, but as a flexible structure to support whole-student development.
- Presentation of an Education Operating Partnership certificate to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, recognizing its leadership and commitment to the co-curricular approach.

Ontario – Education Leadership Gathering:

In Ontario, the Education Leadership Gathering underscored the province’s growing momentum in transforming how student success is defined and supported. The event brought together key education leaders to reflect on the Award’s alignment with Ontario’s education priorities, including mental health, equity, and career readiness. The tone was one of collaboration and purpose, as school board leaders shared both current outcomes and future aspirations for integrating the Award into public education.

Key highlights included:

- Greater Essex County District School Board reaffirmed its leadership as the first provincial Education Operating Partner.
- Peel District School Board is exploring a partnership focused on multilingual learners and equity.
- Fanshawe College was welcomed as the first post-secondary Education Operating Partner, launching the Award through its Women in Skilled Trades program.
- Halton Catholic District School Board is exploring a pilot launch for this fall, with discussions currently underway.

“As a high school student, I gravitated toward experiences outside the classroom—they helped me find myself, build resilience, and gave me the confidence to lead on the global stage,” said Andrea Chakma, Canadian Gold Award Holder and International Youth Representative for the Americas Region. “That’s why I’m excited about the co-curricular approach—it brings the Award into schools, making experiential learning a right, not a privilege.”

A National Vision, Backed by Results

According to Award Canada’s 2024 Impact Report, over 11,000 young people across Canada participated in the Award last year, supported by more than 1,400 adult mentors. With a goal to reach 12,000+ participants in 2025 and expand through new Educational Operating Partnerships, the momentum is clear.

“It’s incredibly energizing to imagine the thousands of young people who will benefit as provincial education authorities and school boards embrace the Award,” said Dr. Mark Little, CEO of Award Canada. “In today’s world, it’s increasingly difficult for youth to break through barriers to employment or post-secondary opportunities. By adopting the Award as a tool to support the ‘whole student,’ school boards are affirming the importance of holistic education—one that builds life skills, resilience, and supports both physical and mental well-being”

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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.

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