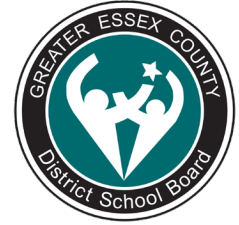


# NEWS RELEASE

**Greater Essex County District School Board**  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GECDSB Students Launch Pilot Program with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Canada**

On Wednesday, February 5th, construction students at the Local Carpenters Union and aviation students at Sandwich Secondary School received exciting news—they have been selected for a one-of-a-kind pilot program in partnership with *Award Canada*, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

This internationally recognized initiative challenges participants to set SMART goals, engage in service projects, and develop critical life and career skills through immersive, hands-on learning experiences.

Designed to foster resilience, confidence, and leadership, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award framework offers structured opportunities for personal growth, physical activity, and skill development—enhancing students' post-secondary applications and career pathways.

*"Imagine earning a globally recognized accreditation while participating in activities you love. This framework allows students to set personal goals, gain additional SHSM certifications, and align their learning with real-world experiences. Supporting the GECDSB's commitment to building confident learners, this initiative will have a lasting impact on students' careers and lives."* – Vicki Houston, Director of Education

*"Award Canada is excited to partner with the Greater Essex County District School Board to celebrate experiential learning, deepen student engagement, and recognize the incredible work happening in Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP) programs."* – Laura Briscoe, Award Canada Education Consultant

As the semester unfolds, SHSM students will push boundaries, master new skills, and make a lasting impact in their communities. But this pilot project is more than just a program—it's a launchpad for their future success, opening doors to post-secondary opportunities, careers, and personal growth.

Follow their journey as they rise to the challenge, break new ground, and showcase the power of experiential learning.

For more information, contact Communications Officer Anita Gilliam at 519-255-3200 ext. 10389.