



Media Release

NNDSB introduces The Skills Catalyst Project

October 1, 2020

North Bay - Near North District School Board (NNDSB) is proud to announce the upcoming introduction of The Skills Catalyst Project, an interactive, online learning platform for secondary students. The Skills Catalyst Project is funded by the Government of Ontario. The Government awarded NNDSB a \$96,220 grant to develop this platform in collaboration with community partners. The Skills Catalyst Project is the first of its kind in NNDSB community. After completing a rigorous application process that began in January, NNDSB is excited to reveal the platform and engage in the experiential aspects with students.

The resource, developed by NNDSB specialist teachers, will provide students with an opportunity to learn both interpersonal and technical skills that are highly valued by modern employers. The training will be provided in partnership with local businesses and community organizations. Since this progressive learning model has been designed for blended learning (online and experiential), students can continue to learn and develop these skills despite the challenges presented by COVID-19.

This unique platform has been designed to meet specific goals. These goals include providing students with specialized skill development opportunities to enhance their employment prospects. The program supports traditionally underrepresented groups by encouraging engagement through workshops and supporting local labour market development. The partnership with YES Employment and the Labour Market Group helps to identify the needs of local employers, providing the next generation of employees with opportunities and skills to be successful moving forward.

“The jobs of the future and the skill sets they require are changing rapidly, and it is so important that we are providing our students with the learning opportunities they will need to join tomorrow’s workforce,” said Vic Fedeli, MPP for Nipissing. “This exciting new project will equip students in Nipissing with the skills they need to be career-ready for the jobs of the future as well as forming connections with local employers and community organizations for a benefit to our whole community.”

"As one of our top priorities, our Board is firmly committed to re-establishing more realistic, pragmatic relationships with our community partners. Doing so will enable us to respond to community needs to create more meaningful conduits for our students to acquire the skills required in today's world," said Board Chair Jay Aspin. "We believe this specially designed, tailored platform will produce a multitude of opportunities which will benefit both our students and local employers and community organizations."

"We are very pleased to be offering these unique opportunities to our students," said Director of Education Craig Myles. "In collaboration with our community partners, we are empowering our students to pursue their dreams and find meaningful and fulfilling employment. Our community will benefit from this partnership as well, as the skills that are being developed are the ones that are needed by local employers. This will aid in the retention of talent in our community and grow further opportunities."

"We are grateful to be able to work with our community and are excited to be in consultation to add more interested local partners to the list of stellar stakeholders who helped in framing this proposal," said Corporate Affairs Officer Liana Blaskievich. "We are thankful to the teachers who created this specialized learning. This talented group and our partners are the reason we can bring this new immersive learning opportunity to our students."

Community partners involved in this initiative thus far include: Canadore College, Labour Market Group, Nipissing University, North Bay Regional Health Centre, Voyageur Airways and YES Employment.

Near North District School Board is an English-language public school board serving the North Bay - Parry Sound - Nipissing area. The Board consists of approximately 10,000 students in 27 elementary schools, seven secondary/senior schools and various alternative learning centres. For more information, please visit nearnorthschools.ca and follow Near North District School Board on social media.

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