



For immediate release  
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**More students connect to super-fast optical network**  
***Northern Ontario school board connects to global grid of research networks***

TORONTO – More Northern Ontario students will soon have access to the global grid of advanced research and education networks as Near North District School Board in the Nipissing, Almaguin Highlands, and Parry Sound area connects to the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION).

ORION currently connects approximately 800,000 elementary and secondary school students across the province. By connecting, schools can enjoy enhanced quality videoconferencing when participating in the many distance learning programs offered by Canada's leading cultural and educational organizations, such as the Virtual Researcher on Call (VROC) program, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Canadian Museum of Nature, and the Canadian Space Agency.

The Near North District School Board offers exemplary programs and services to approximately 11,000 students at 43 schools in the districts of Nipissing and Parry Sound.

"This is an outstanding opportunity to bring to the Near North District School Board's students the most innovative technological curriculum strategies to enhance student success," says Director of Education Heli Vail. "We are a board that is moving forward in technology and are very proud of the fact that we are one of the first group of boards to implement this exemplary resource for our students"

"We are delighted that students in the Near North will be able to connect with other students, researchers and institutions across Ontario, Canada and around the world over ORION," says Phil Baker, ORION President and CEO. "The Near North District School Board is the 16<sup>th</sup> board to connect, moving us closer to our goal of providing all of Ontario's 1.9 million K-12 students with access to ORION and the advanced resources and capabilities it enables."

About ORION

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION), a not-for-profit organization, is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network which connects all of Ontario's universities, most colleges, several medical and other public research facilities and a growing number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks. Stretching 5,800 kilometres over 21 communities throughout Ontario, ORION connects over one million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff to critical infrastructure for research, education and innovation. Visit [www.orion.on.ca](http://www.orion.on.ca).

- 30 -

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