

For immediate release
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Over 1 million K-12 students now connected to Ontario's advanced network *Ottawa Catholic School Board connects to ORION*

OTTAWA - The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) has reached an important milestone, now connecting more than one million elementary and secondary school students at 25 school boards across Ontario, with the Ottawa Catholic School Board the latest board to join Ontario's next-generation research and education network.

"Surpassing the one million mark is an important milestone for us," says Dr. Darin Graham, ORION President and CEO. "Schools are realizing that connecting to advanced networks like ORION is crucial to delivering enhanced teaching and learning resources and activities. With each board, we move closer to our goal of providing all of Ontario's K-12 students with access to ORION and the advanced resources and capabilities it enables."

"As the local MPP, I am excited to see our schools take the initiative to partner with organizations that can help them create more innovative learning environments," said Yasir Naqvi, MPP (Ottawa Centre). "Education today is increasingly dependent on access to new and more interactive online applications and resources. It is wonderful that a growing number of Ontario students now have access to ORION and the new, next-generation teaching and learning capabilities it brings, not just here in Ottawa, but across Ontario."

Nearly forty thousand more elementary and secondary school students in the Ottawa region now have access to ORION and other advanced research and education networks around the world, as the Ottawa Catholic School Board connects to ORION.

"As we concentrate on putting the right technologies in the hands of the 21st Century learner, our partnership with ORION, Cogent Communications, Atria Networks and OttawaRAN provides better tools for our students. It gives them improved connection speed and access to several important educational resources while providing both at a lower cost to the Board," said Tom D'Amico, Superintendent of Student Success (Learning Technologies).

The Ottawa Catholic School Board has 80 schools serving approximately 39,000 students across the City of Ottawa. It joins other research and education institutions in the Ottawa region connected to ORION, such as the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, Carleton University, University of Ottawa, Algonquin College, and the Canadian Museum of Nature.

By connecting to ORION, 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.

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The Ottawa Catholic School Board is connecting to ORION through OttawaRAN, the Ottawa area's regional network, working with Atria Networks. The board is also working with ORION to access enhanced Internet connectivity with Cogent Communications at the ORION Optical Exchange in Toronto.

OttawaRAN has been experiencing its own growth and success recently. OCSB is the third Ottawa public institution to join the regional network in the past 12 months, doubling the number of connected member institutions. OttawaRAN provides local organizations with a range of network services, including an easy on-ramp to the ORION network.

Learn more about the Ottawa Catholic School Board at www.ottawacatholicschools.ca.

About ORION

Hundreds of times faster than the Internet, ORION is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network. Established as a not-for-profit corporation in 2001, ORION links 1.7 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff who depend on ORION for teaching and learning and to enable their research collaborations and discoveries in physics, cancer research, environmental science and technologies, social sciences and the humanities and multiple other disciplines. It connects users and institutions to each other, and through CANARIE - Canada's advanced research and innovation network - to high-capacity research and education networks, partners and collaborators across Canada and around the world. Visit www.orion.on.ca.

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