

Renfrew County Catholic District School Board Director's Annual Report 2008–2009



Message from the Director of Education

I am pleased to present this Annual Report on the commitments and achievements of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board for the 2008–2009 school year.

Behind the graphs and facts set out in these pages lies a wealth of student achievement and personal success stories. I hope that everyone who reviews this publication experiences the joy and hope that I find within its pages.

Our board's overall academic achievements are reason for celebration. In many cases, we are both above the provincial average and showing continual improvement within our own system. Such statistics are clear indicators of the way our system works to "nurture the giftedness, self-worth and potential of each individual".

I am equally inspired by the way our Catholic educational environment takes us beyond the level of the individual. We are a true community in every sense of the word. We support one another, we work together for common goals, and we share our gifts generously.

Our school board's theme for the 2008–2009 school year was Fostering a World View shaped by the Catholic Conversation about life's meaning and purpose. Within this report, you will see many examples of how this focus was put into action by our students, our staff, our leadership team and our partners in the larger Catholic community. We have reached out to the Renfrew County Child Poverty Action Network, and supported food drives and school breakfast clubs. We have reached beyond our national borders through such mission activities as the annual pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic.

As I review the many diverse accomplishments gained in 2008–2009, I am inspired to give thanks. Our Lord has given us so many gifts!

I believe that each of us has an important leadership role to play in our communities at large to share our Catholic message about what is really important. Sharing of our resources with others—including our time, talent and faith—is what will leave God's footprint for future generations.

This annual report is full of those footprints, and we continue to follow their path in our continuing work as stewards and disciples.

Michele Arbour,
Director of Education



Our Mission Statement: *Inspired by our rich heritage and challenged by the struggles of our past, we are an inclusive Catholic educational community called to express our mission as Church to pass on the Good News of Jesus Christ, to make it relevant in the world today, and to be the hope for the future.*

Leadership and partnerships

“Education and catechesis occupy an essential place in the life of the Catholic Church. Each generation of Catholics receives the blessed responsibility to hand on the faith to our young people. The very act of transmitting the faith deeply enriches our own faith.”

—*Most Reverend Michael Mulhall, Bishop of Pembroke*

Faith formation is a never-ending pursuit

Lifelong learning and spiritual development are fundamental approaches for the leadership team for Renfrew County’s Catholic schools.

Trustees, administrative staff, principals, vice-principals and coordinators are encouraged to always model a servant leadership style following the example of Jesus, and to take every opportunity to grow in that faith.

Throughout the 2008–2009 school year, for example, principals from throughout the county participated in a year-long faith formation program.

Five times during the year, they engaged in active discussions led by Father Ryan Holly. Together they explored the teachings of the church, the liturgy, Scripture, the eucharist, and the vocation and call of the laity.

The discussions were wide-ranging, from how Catholicism relates to other religions and the broader Christian community to the format of the worship service and how it unites Catholics worldwide.

Many found the session on the Catholic vocation especially rewarding. As trustees, senior administrators and school leaders, the board’s leadership team has a special responsibility for sharing their Catholic beliefs and fostering a caring, thoughtful and spiritual environment.

“More than ever, Jesus must be at the centre of the conversation we have with students, staff and our larger communities.”

—*Michele Arbour, Director of Education*

Our partnerships

It truly does take a community to educate a child. At the heart of every aspect of Catholic education are our primary partners: school, church and home. Our board vision seeks to “enhance relationships among members of the home, school, parish and extended community. We work closely with parents and the local parishes to instill Catholic values that complement our academic programs. Outreach activities, community responsibility and an attitude of respect are basic expectations of our students. Throughout the school year, we work with a variety of other community partners—the business sector, social service organizations and volunteer groups—in a comprehensive community approach to meet the needs of every student.



Meet the RCCDSB leadership team

Trustees, seated: **Bob Michaud**, Laurentian Valley Township, North Algona Wilberforce Township, Admaston/Bromley Township, Bonnechere Valley Township; Chair **Andrew Bray**, Arnprior, McNab/Braeside Township, Great Madawaska Township; Vice-Chair **Bob Schreader**, Pembroke; **Dave Howard**, Deep River, Laurentian Hills, Head, Clara & Maria Township, Petawawa. **Standing:** **Marlene Borutski**, Killaloe, Hagarty & Richards Township, Brudenell Lyndoch Raglan Township, Madawaska Valley Township; **Judy Ellis**, Native Trustee; **Ashley**

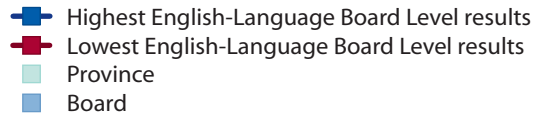
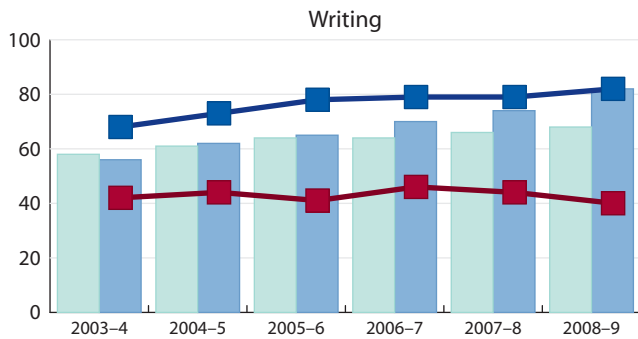
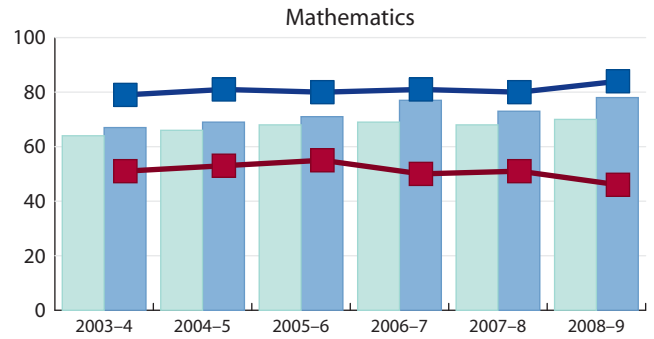
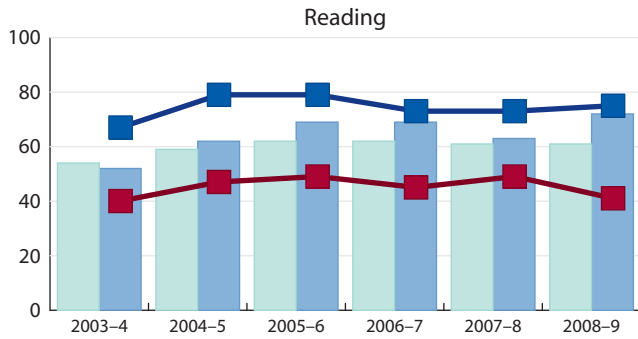


Stroud, Pupil Representative, St. Joseph’s Catholic High School, Renfrew; **Katie Brooks**, Pupil Representative, Bishop Smith Catholic High School, Pembroke; **Anne Smith**, Renfrew, Horton Township, Whitewater Region Township

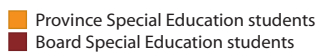
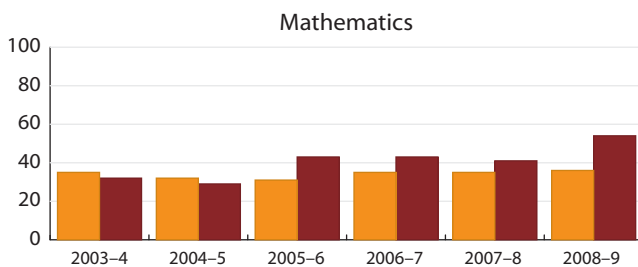
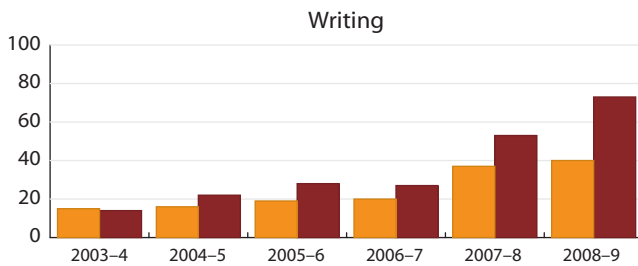
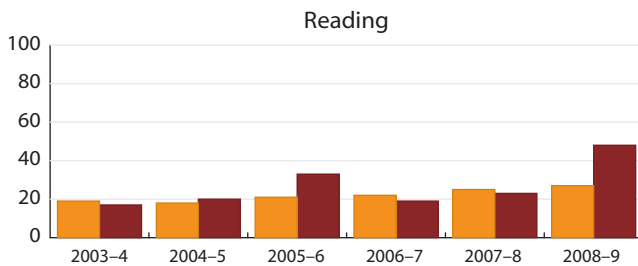
Administrative team from left: Superintendent of Educational Services **Jaimie Perry**; Superintendent of Business Services **Mary Lynn Schauer**; Manager of Plant Services **Ivan Johnson**; Director of Education **Michele Arbour**; Manager of IT Services **Darryl Denyes**; Manager of Human Resources Services **Marian Neeson**; Assistant to the Director of Education **Mark Searson**

EQAO standardized test results

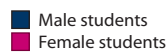
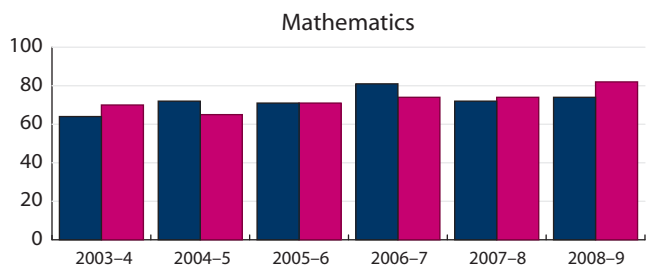
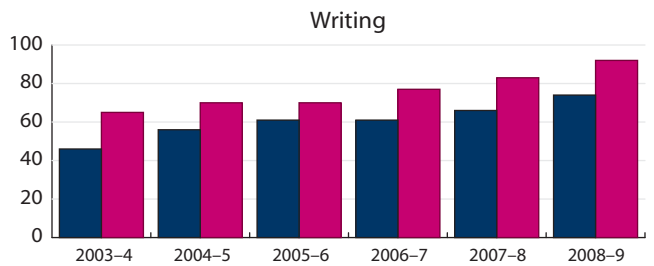
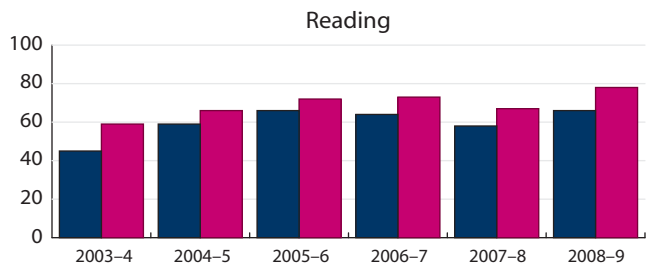
Grade 3



Special Education results

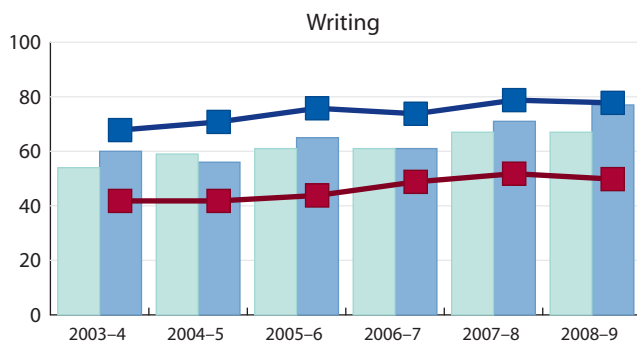
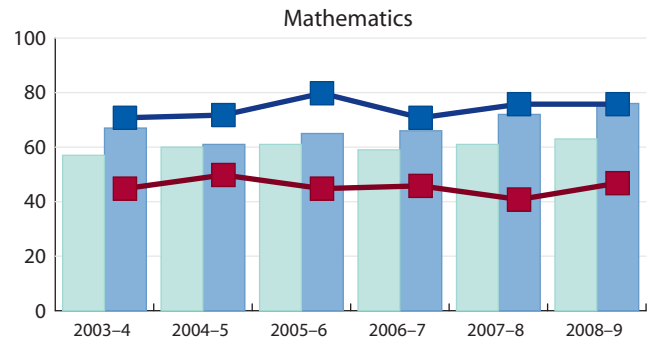
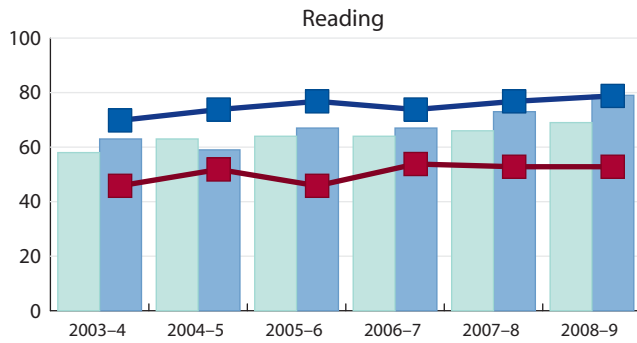


Results by Gender



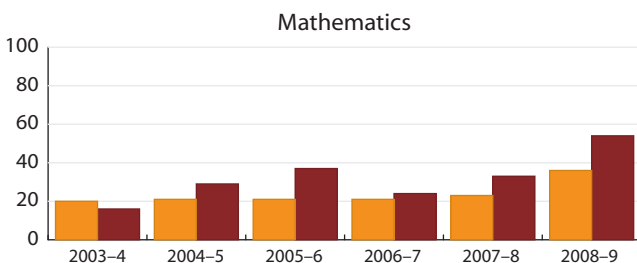
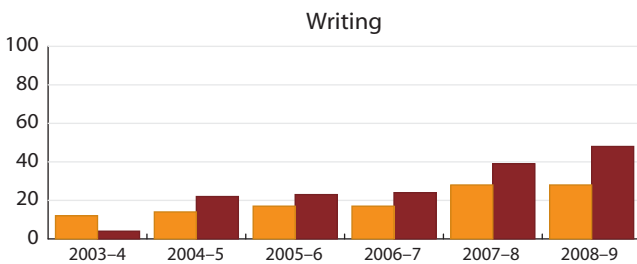
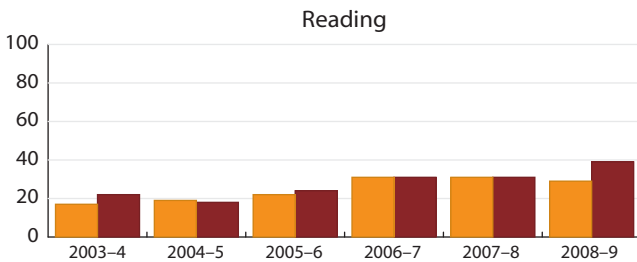
EQAO standardized test results

Grade 6



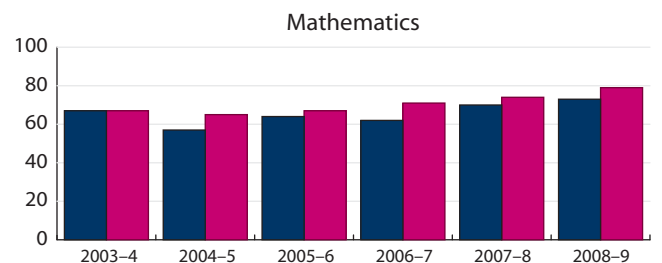
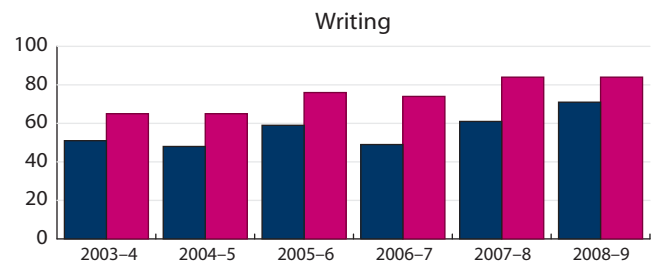
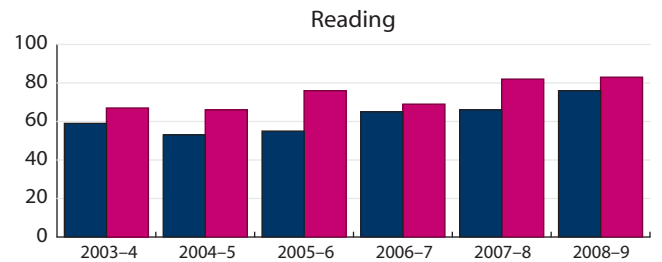
- Highest English-Language Board Level results
- Lowest English-Language Board Level results
- Province
- Board

Special Education results



- Province Special Education students
- Board Special Education students

Results by Gender

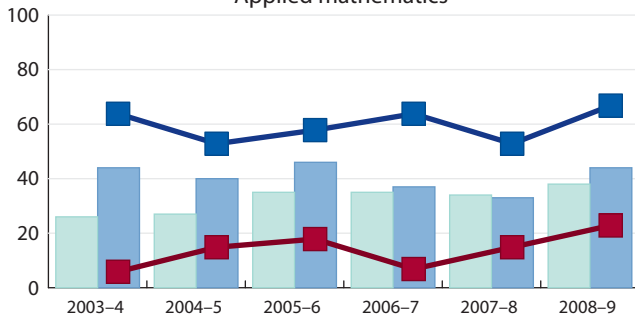


- Male students
- Female students

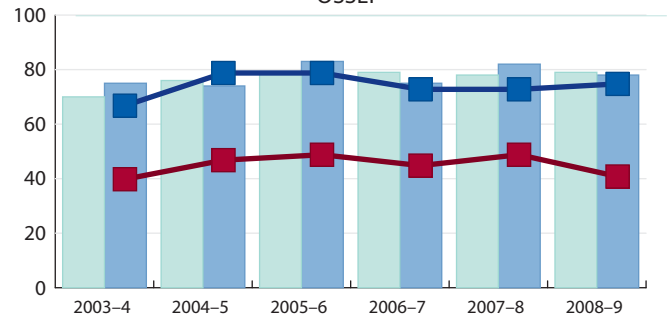
EQAO standardized test results

Grade 9

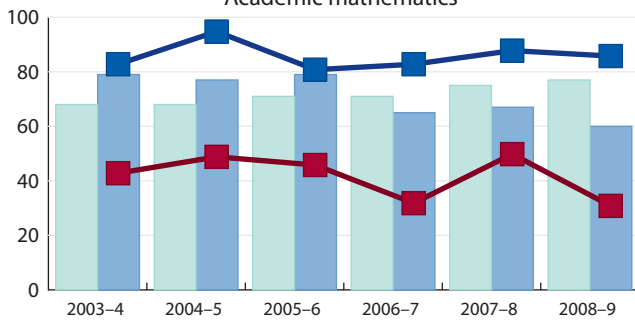
Applied mathematics



OSSLT



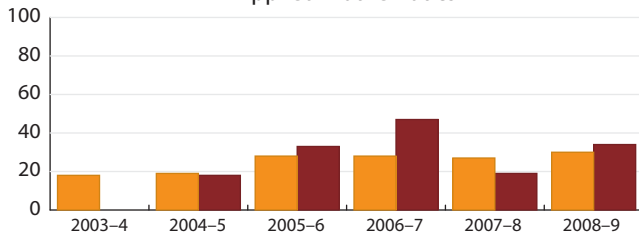
Academic mathematics



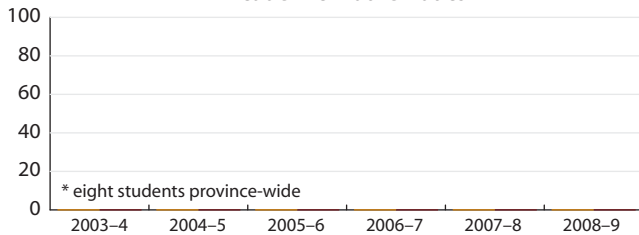
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Special Education results

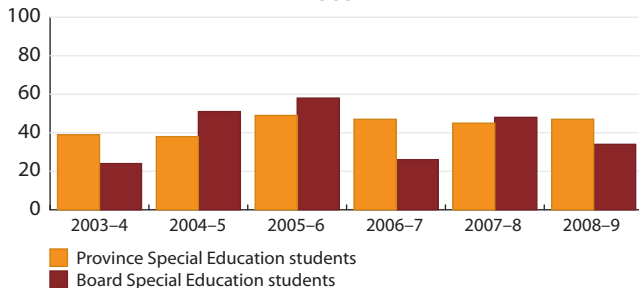
Applied mathematics



Academic mathematics

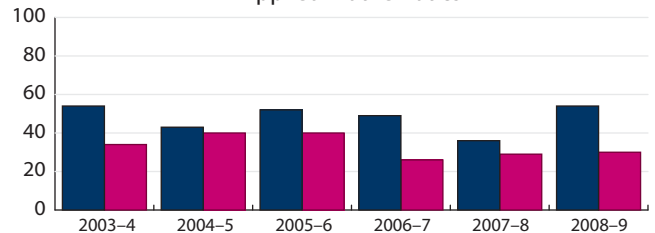


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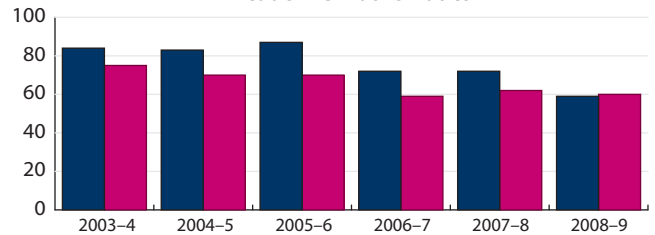


Results by Gender

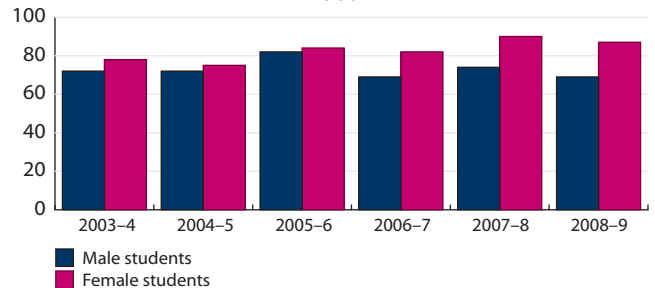
Applied mathematics



Academic mathematics



OSSLT



Academic successes

Measuring success in different ways for different learners

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is extremely proud of the EQAO standardized test results set out in graph form on the accompanying pages of this newsletter.

However, we must emphasize that academic success goes beyond the marks achieved on a single test.

In fact, academic excellence is present each and every day in all of our schools. It happens when a teacher really connects with a student; when a pupil puts every ounce of effort into a project; when classmates are engaged in a lively discussion about a topic

Elementary quick facts:

		Reading	Writing	Math
Grade 3	Board	72	82	78
	Province	61	68	70
Grade 6	Board	79	77	76
	Province	69	67	63

- RCCDSB has already exceeded the provincial goal to achieve 75% on grade 6 EQAO assessments by 2011.

of study; when a book or video in the school library captures a learner's imagination; when a tough question is asked and the teacher is learning along with the students.

In Renfrew County's "Schools To Believe In", academic success is counted in a variety of ways as we live out our mission to "nurture the giftedness, self-worth and potential of each individual".

Secondary quick facts:

- 75.6% of our students in their second year in high school had completed at least 16 credits by June 30, 2008. This compares favourably to the provincial figure of 68.3% of students. (Note: most recent data available is for 2007–2008 school year.)
- Specialist High Skills Major courses were introduced in Health Care Services, Environment/Forestry and Hospitality and Tourism for career-focused students.
- 84% of Grade 9 pupils achieve 8 credits, compared to 79% for the province.
- Pass rates in Grade 9 and 10 programs:

	Board	Province
Academic	96.9%	95.7%
Applied	92.4%	85.9%
LDCC	94.2%	80.5%



Notable accomplishments

- **Writing:** In schools across the county, student writing was a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented and time-bound) goal for the school year. Classes were abuzz with brain-storming sessions, Smartboards or sandwich boards displaying paragraphs in progress, sentence formation and editing. *Of particular note:* Alina Gdaniec, 9, of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Pembroke was published in the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association's collection of outstanding examples of student writing.
- **Technology:** SmartBoard technology has turned our educational world around—literally. Students often now face away from the blackboard and toward the SmartBoard, where they can use touchscreens to go through math formulas, share their individual work with the rest of the class, and access outside resources.
- **New opportunities:** The opening of the new addition at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew opened the door to new courses for the students there. The new technology wing now offers expanded automotive programs and a new foods class, as well as new facilities for construction and woodworking. School officials are especially pleased that the new environment has appealed to female students, who have enrolled in the automotive and construction classes in record numbers.

Alternative learning opportunities

Understanding that some of our students need an alternative setting and programming to meet their full potential, the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board offers the following programs for alternative education and students in care or treatment:

- Valleycrest classrooms, Pembroke and Renfrew
- New Horizons classroom, Renfrew
- Bishop Smith Catholic High School Alternative site
- St. Joseph's Catholic High School Alternative site
- Young Parent Support Program, Pembroke

The alternative school program supports students to achieve their educational and personal goals. They offer:

- flexibility in schedules
- informal learning environments
- lower student–teacher ratios
- settings characterized by warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy

In the spring of 2009, Bishop Smith Catholic High School initiated an alternative education pilot project offering a work opportunity plus high school credits for students who opted for a co-op program. A full-time co-op teacher led a careers education course in conjunction with paid co-op placements in the community. The program was a resounding success, resulting in an all-time high of 12 graduates receiving Ontario Secondary School diplomas through the alternative school program in 2008–2009.

At St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew, individual anecdotes tell the story of alternative education success. These include:

- the student who was able to catch up on missed credits, and then ease himself back into the regular secondary school program, beginning with a single course and then progressing through a half-day schedule to full-time studies.
- the student who was supported by his regular classroom teacher, who sent assignments and resources to the alternative school site.
- the many students who are combining e-learning, correspondence courses and co-op to take full advantage of the wide range of educational opportunities offered.

All of the 2008–2009 alternative education students received at least three credits per semester.



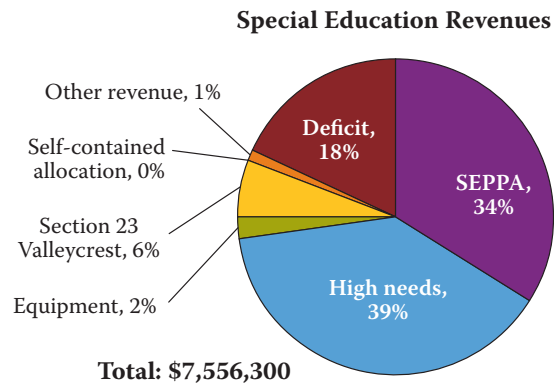
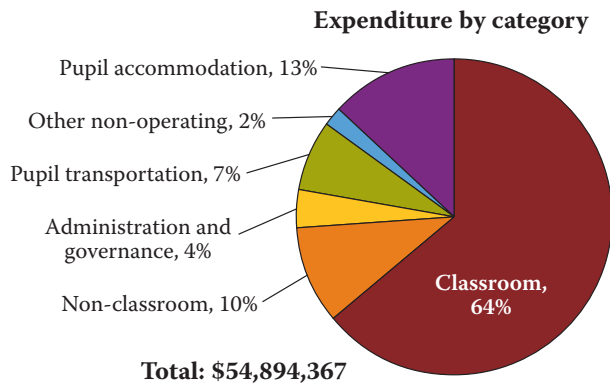
Improving outcomes for all students

- Full-time Aboriginal education teacher for literacy/numeracy
- After-school tutor program
- Tutors in the classroom
- Hila enrichment program (science and technology)
- Expanded summer school program
 - transportation provided
 - summer booster program (SK to Grade 6)
 - literacy and numeracy (Grades 7 and 8)
 - credit recovery (Grades 9 and 10)
- Mini-enrichment courses at Carleton University and University of Ottawa
- Algonquin College “Career Sampler” (Grades 7 and 8)

Financial stewardship

2009–2010 budget

The RCCDSB practice of good resource stewardship is evident in the board's ongoing ability to plan and execute balanced budgets.

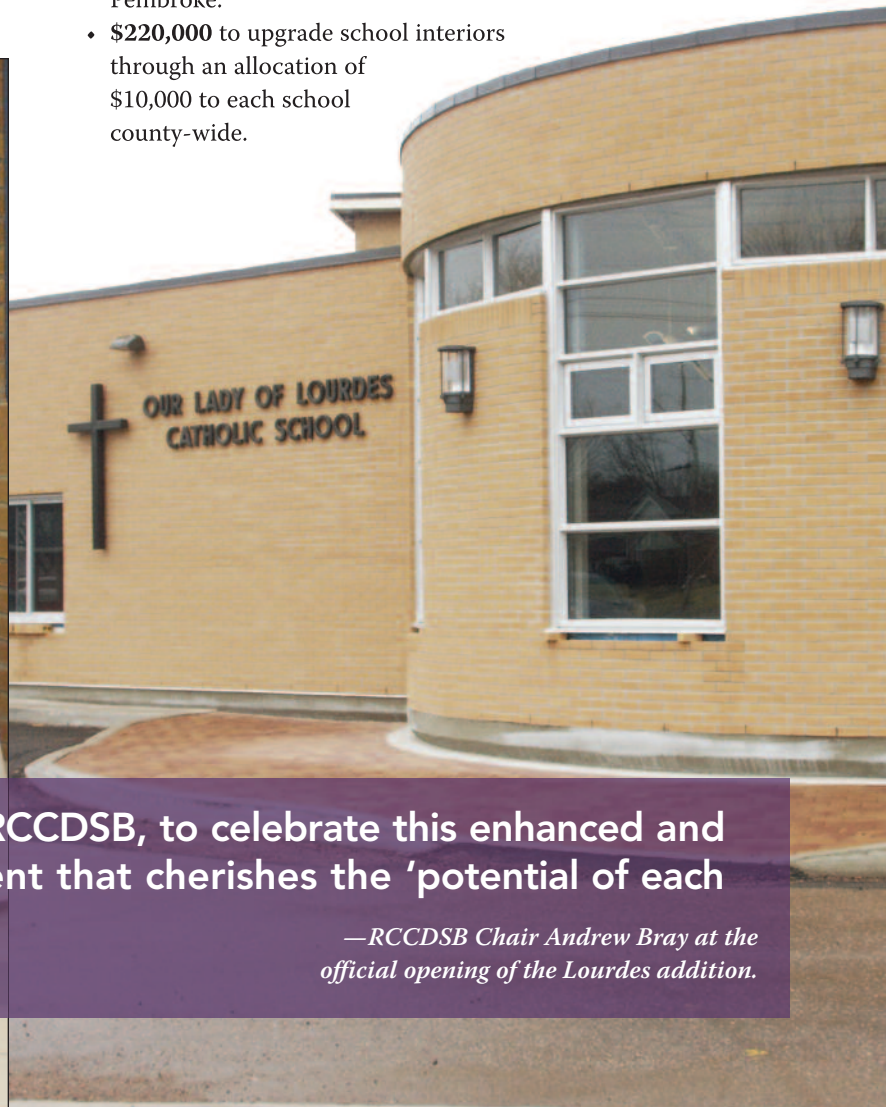


Our schools—physical resources

The RCCDSB is committed to providing good places to learn. Investments in 2008–2009 included:

- Approximately **\$1 million** in “Good Places to Learn” funds for projects such as new roofs at John XXIII Catholic School in Arnprior, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School in Renfrew, St. James Catholic School in Eganville and St. Mary’s Catholic School in Deep River; and window replacements at Holy Name and Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke.

- More than **\$250,000** in provincial renewal funds for roofing work at St. Andrew’s Catholic School in Killaloe and Holy Name in Pembroke, a new gymnasium floor at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Deep River, and a new phone/public address system and the commencement of science lab retrofits at Bishop Smith Catholic High School.
- Completion of three new classrooms and a library/computer room addition at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Pembroke.
- **\$220,000** to upgrade school interiors through an allocation of \$10,000 to each school county-wide.



“I feel privileged, as Chair of the RCCDSB, to celebrate this enhanced and beautiful Christ-centred environment that cherishes the ‘potential of each individual’ within its walls.”

—RCCDSB Chair Andrew Bray at the official opening of the Lourdes addition.

Animating our vision

Setting out the organizational plan

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board took a new approach to strategic planning as we entered the 2008–2009 school year.

The seeds were actually planted the previous year, when focus groups of six, seven or eight stakeholders were invited to talk about the meaning of our Catholic schools in their lives. Teachers and other staff members were invited to talk about the school board mission statement and the priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Through guided discussions, the groups provided an environmental scan. The information they shared has helped us to form new and exciting ways to heighten our awareness of our Catholic identity.

Underlying all of the discussions was the school board's special mission as a Catholic organization.

The end result is a dynamic strategic plan that is built on Catholicity, which is set out in the planning diagram as the focal point at the head of all endeavours. At the heart of the diagram is the educational programming that we provide. The foundation of the diagram represents the supporting roles played by departments such as human resources, plant, information technology, finance and transportation.

Surrounding this strategic diagram is a blue circle representing both the Catholic context of the Universal Church together with the Diocese of Pembroke and local parishes, and the Ontario Ministry of Education context.

The overall strategic diagram is followed by more specific strategic plans for each aspect of the school board's operations. Those more specific plans, in turn, have been used to develop individual school plans with goals, timelines and a set of specific strategies.

Fostering a world view shaped by the Catholic Conversation about life's meaning and purpose

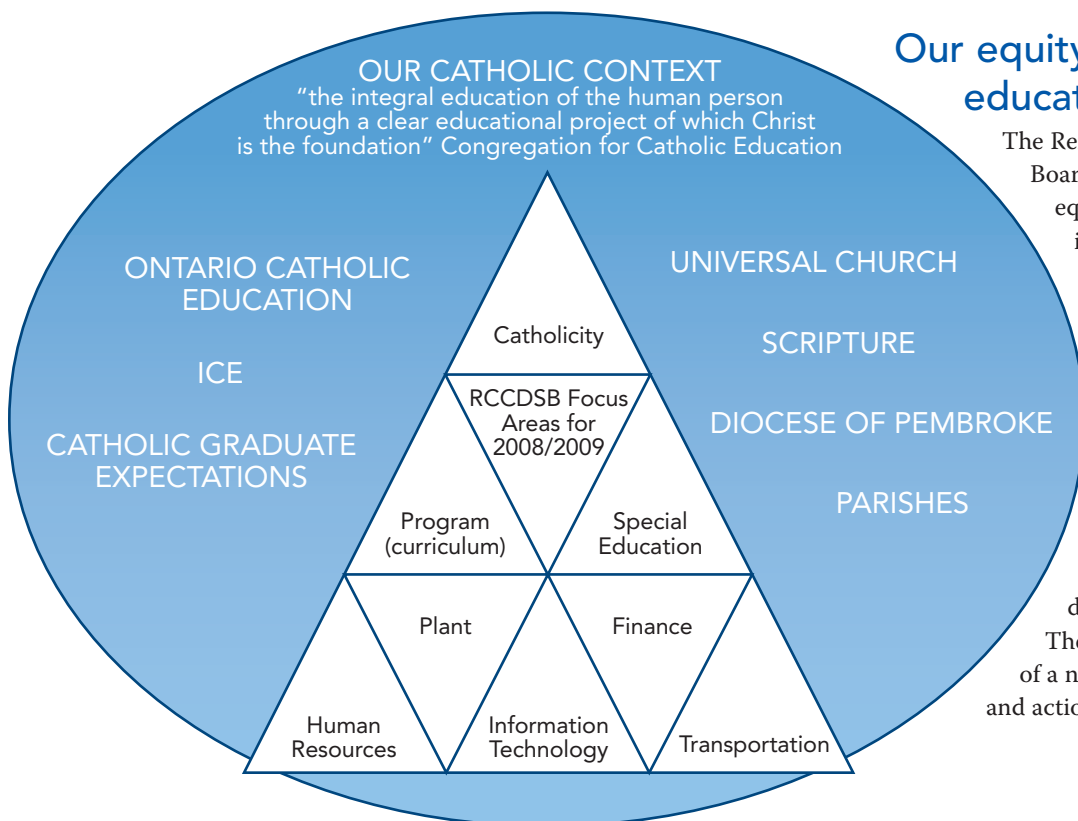
Our board-wide theme for the 2008–2009 school year was "Fostering a World View".

Teachers, staff members and students were encouraged to think beyond themselves and contemplate how their own actions affect others.

Activities based on this theme were truly global in nature—from Third World assistance to local charitable work to environmental stewardship.

Everyone within our school system was given opportunities to think about our role as stewards of God's handiwork.

2008–2009 marked the 20th year that RCCDSB secondary students have traveled to the Dominican Republic, where they learn first-hand the realities of poverty and how our sharing can make a difference. Bravo to everyone who has volunteered and participated in this important outreach. It truly has changed lives!



Our equity and inclusive education strategy

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis 1:27). Within this framework, the board has begun a review of existing equity and inclusive education policies. During the 2008–2009 school year, the board's leadership team for this initiative was put in place. Their work will include analysis of existing policies and practices, engagement with parents and consultation with diverse communities and stakeholders. The final result will be the implementation of a new equity and inclusive education policy and action plan.