

Renfrew County Catholic District School Board Director's Annual Report 2007–2008



Who we are

RCCDSB is an inclusive Catholic education community that includes 22 schools with 5,125 students.

Our 2007–2008 goal

To develop authentic Catholic community schools and empower them as communities of faith.

Achieving the goal

Renfrew County's Catholic schools educate in the light of faith, fostering a strong culture of academic excellence and spiritual growth in an environment that is both challenging and nurturing.

In 2007–2008, our board has supported this culture by:

- promoting a year-long, county-wide drive to “Make a difference” for the local poor: From September 2007 to June 2008 schools identified local initiatives and various ways to contribute to food banks, child poverty organizations and other local charities for the underprivileged.

- immersing ourselves in prayerful observance of Catholic Education Week, April 2008, with the theme “We Are Called” and daily sub-themes highlighting specific Catholic characteristics.
- providing the Dominican Republic experience for 14 secondary students who travelled to the Third World for personal participation in global social justice.
- setting aside two days in February 2008 for a trustee retreat dedicated to adult faith formation.
- encouraging 100% employee attendance at our annual Christian Community Day, November 7, 2008, where Keynote Speaker Noel Martin, Director of Catholic Education for the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, spoke about our shared journey of faith.

“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” — Our Vision



Our Catholic community focus for 2007–2008: Challenge the consumer culture with lives dedicated to the principles of social justice in the spirit of Gospel values.

What we do

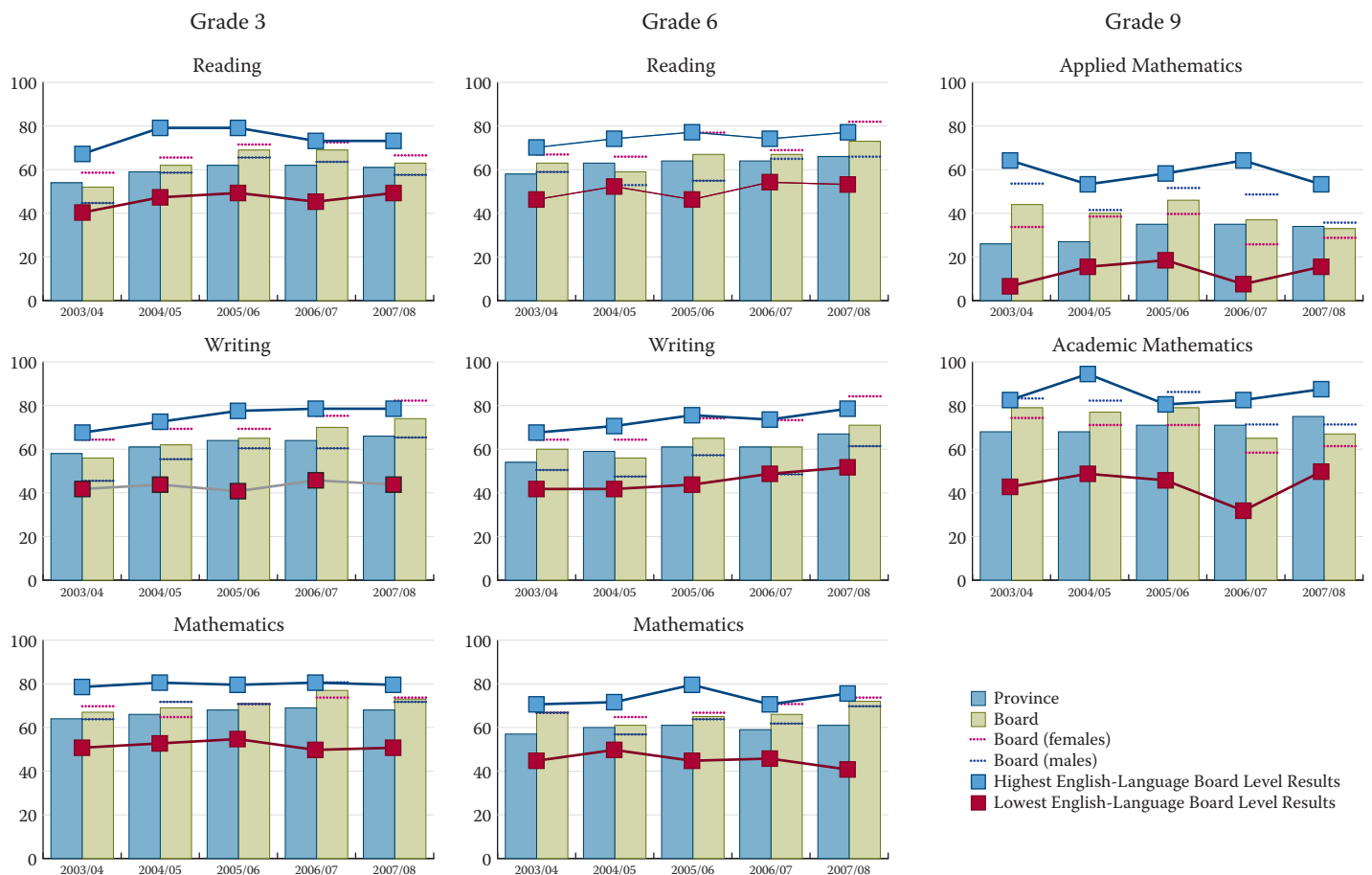
Academic success in Renfrew County Catholic schools is measured by the progress we make, whether we are challenging our top achievers or overcoming tough learning hurdles.

Here are some of our notable achievements in 2007–2008

- John XXIII Catholic School in Arnprior and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School in Petawawa received Garfield Weston Awards for Excellence in Education, placing them in Ontario's top one per cent of schools achieving fast, consistent improvement in academic achievement.
- The Ontario Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat designated Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School as one of the province's 40 "Schools on the Move", recognizing its strong provincial testing results.
- St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School in Renfrew is a Lighthouse demonstration school, demonstrating the practices it employs to foster early reading skills.
- Primary and junior teachers received literacy and numeracy training and resource support throughout the school year in language arts and mathematics assessment.
- The board-wide Student Success focus was on the new Specialist High Skills Majors, differentiated instruction,

transitions to high school and school student success teams. These programs supported more than 100 grade 7 to 12 students board-wide.

- OSSLT results improved (93% at St. Joseph's Catholic High School and 84% at Bishop Smith Catholic High School).
- Grade 9 and 10 credit accumulation are above 80%.
- Every school is now benefitting from our board's investment of \$130,000 in SmartBoard technology.
- St. James Catholic School in Eganville has capitalized on resources as a "turn-around" school, and has already surpassed EQAO 75% success targets in some cases.
- We offer alternate schools in Pembroke and Renfrew, as well as a Young Parents Support Program in Pembroke.
- Three hundred students attended summer school in 26 classrooms at 11 sites throughout the county. The introduction of bus transportation made the program more accessible for all students served by this rural board.
- Professional learning communities have been established to capitalize on our in-house expertise and enhance our culture of professional support and collaboration.
- We have achieved the Ministry requirement that at least 90% of primary classes have 20 or fewer students.
- 69.8% of students achieved 16 or more credits by age 16 as of June 30, 2008 and the previous three years.



*Our student achievement focus for 2007–2008:
Nurture the giftedness, self-worth and potential of each individual.*

Our resources and partnerships

The Renfrew County Catholic School Board supports safe and healthy schools and communities through a variety of initiatives.

Community connections

As one point in the triangle of school, parish and home, we maintain vital connections with our churches and families. Parish priests and diocesan leaders are regular visitors in our schools and we encourage students to be active supporters of church and society.

Our outreach includes:

- fostering active participation in school councils.
- regular production of “Notebook”, a newsletter highlighting our activities and accomplishments that is distributed through the schools and parishes.
- monthly “Good News” releases issued at board meetings.
- an open-door policy at our board office and schools.

Health and safety

Healthy bodies are as important as healthy minds and spirit. Our healthy accomplishments include:

- breakfast and nutritious snack programs in our schools.
- achieving regional and national honours, such as Our Lady of Grace Catholic School in Westmeath which has been honoured twice by the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, and also received a diamond award from the Canadian Association for Health, Education, Recreation and Dance for its quality daily physical education.
- focused partnerships such as the “Kid Active” program offered by St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School with the Town of Renfrew—an after-school activity program that is also engaging grade 6 students in a research study examining the impact of the program on eating and activity habits.



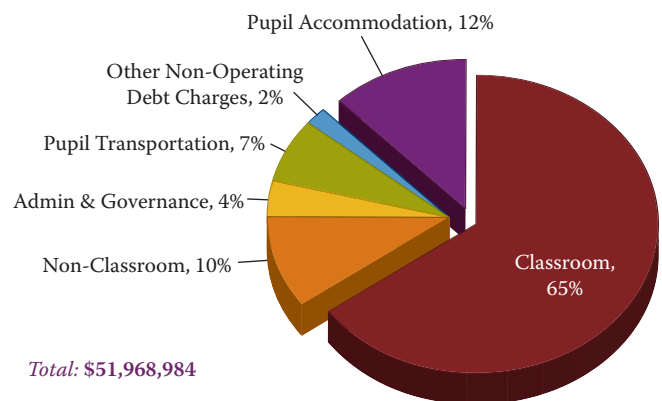
Students and teachers are making good use of the new facilities at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew, one of the many capital projects undertaken by the school board in 2007–2008.

Physical plant

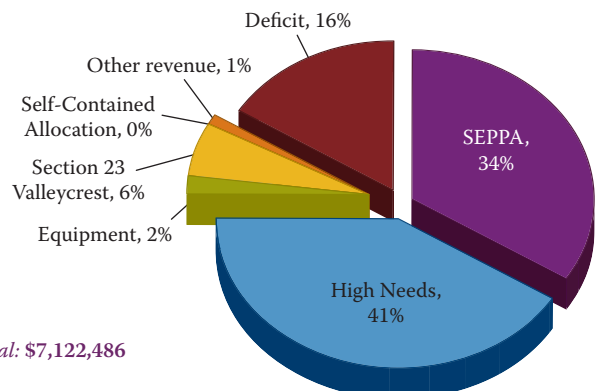
The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is committed to providing good places to learn. Investments in 2007–2008 include:

- completion of a new technology wing at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew.
- an allocation of \$10,000 to each school to upgrade school interiors.
- undertaking construction of three classrooms and a library/computer room at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Pembroke.
- investment of \$975,000 in “Good Places to Learn” funding and an additional \$350,000 in grant money to improve school buildings, including:
 - roof upgrades at John XXIII Catholic School in Arnprior, St. Mary's Catholic School in Deep River, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School in Renfrew and Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke.
 - a lighting retrofit at St. Michael's Catholic School in Douglas.
 - window replacements at Holy Name Catholic School and Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke.
 - new gymnasium floors at St. Joseph's Catholic High School and St. Mary's Catholic School in Deep River.

Expenditures by Category



Special Education Revenues



Our corporate focus for 2007–2008:

Claim our role as global stewards cherishing the environment and all life in it.

Our leadership



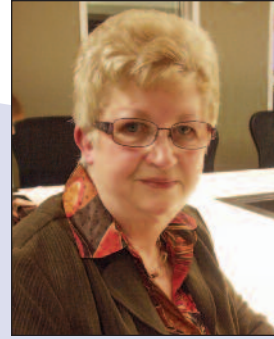
**Michele Arbour,
Director of Education**



**Andy Bray, Chair,
Arnprior,
McNab/Braeside
Township,
Greater Madawaska
Township**



**Bob Schreader,
Vice-Chair, Pembroke**



**Marlene Borutski,
Killaloe, Hagarty &
Richards Township,
Brudenell Lyndoch
Raglan Township,
Madawaska Valley
Township**



**Bob Michaud,
Laurentian Valley
Township, North
Algona Wilberforce
Township,
Admaston/Bromley
Township, Bonnechere
Valley Township**



**Judy Ellis,
Native Trustee**



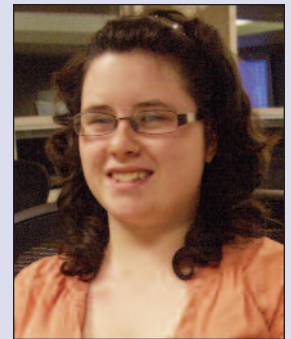
**Dave Howard,
Deep River,
Laurentian Hills,
Head Clara Maria
Township, Petawawa**



**Ann Smith, Renfrew,
Horton Township,
Whitewater Region
Township**



**Brittany Morris,
Student Trustee,
Bishop Smith Catholic
High School, Pembroke**



**Ashley Stroud,
Student Trustee,
St. Joseph's Catholic
High School, Renfrew**

A message from the Director of Education

Our goal for the 2007–2008 school year was both meaningful and simple: To develop authentic Catholic community schools and empower them as communities of faith.

This focus has created many exciting and exhilarating opportunities over the past 12 months. Together, we have changed lives—in our own homes, in our neighbourhoods and across the globe. Our students and their teachers have explored the world and thought deeply about their roles within it. They have reflected on their individual Catholic missions, and they have helped shape our Catholic community through their thoughts, words and actions.

At the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, we are privileged to work with a caring bishop and priests, as well as professional educational colleagues, engaged parents and

communities. Our students are surrounded with a love for Jesus and learning, and I cannot imagine a more powerful combination!

As an educational system, we are committed to providing our children with the best possible academic and spiritual formation.

As we prepared this report, I found it gratifying to reflect on our accomplishments of the past year, and to review what we have done as authentic communities of learning and faith. I am pleased to provide you with this information related to our budget and the many programs and services provided through the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board.

Our community can certainly celebrate this remarkable achievement of providing *Schools To Believe In!*

**Michele Arbour,
Director of Education**