Reaching out to parents

One priority of the RCCDSB Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is encouraging and supporting parent engagement in their children’s education through enhanced communication. We are working to promote ongoing dialogue between parents, school councils and the Board.

That is why the PIC ‘took the show on the road’, travelling with our Director, Superintendents and Trustees to meet with each school council in our Board. These sessions allowed us to hear firsthand and share many stories about best practices, social justice initiatives and Catholicity within our schools.

We also share PIC news through our website and our newsletter, but we know communication is a two-way street and we want to hear from parents. We have scheduled our meetings in each area to try to best accommodate participation.

Your voice is valuable and we benefit from your opinions and perspectives. When we work together, we can achieve positive results—the most important being improved student success!

Help fundraise for your school council simply by paying online

The RCCDSB is offering incentives of up to $1,000 to school councils when adoption of the new School Cash Online program reaches 50%, 75% and 90% levels.

**Convenient and safe**
- registration takes less than five minutes
- pay from home 24/7
- no more need to send cash or cheques
- system can email notifications for upcoming events

**Improves efficiency**
- automatically deposits money in school account
- reduces time spent counting cash/cheques and amount of cash on hand
- uses a secure website
- email notices about events (pizza orders, field trips, etc.) equals less paper

Please visit [https://renfrewcatholic.schoolcashonline.com/](https://renfrewcatholic.schoolcashonline.com/) for more information or to sign up!

Save the date

**PIC meetings**
Come out and meet your local trustee, share your thoughts and be the parent voice for your school.
- Renfrew/Arnprior: November 4, 2015, 7 p.m. — St. Joseph’s High School
- Madawaska: January 27, 2016, 7 p.m.— St. Andrews Catholic School
- Pembroke/Petawawa: March 30, 2016, 7 p.m.—Our Lady of Lourdes
- Eganville: June 15, 2016, 7 p.m.—St. James Catholic School

Check RCCDSB PIC news and events at [http://rccdsb.edu.on.ca/parent-involvement-committee/](http://rccdsb.edu.on.ca/parent-involvement-committee/)
Helpful hints for parents

Help your teen get organized

Simple solutions to help your teen manage their time, assignments and responsibilities:
• start an “academic” planner to keep track of daily, weekly and monthly dates and deadlines
• use a cell phone, watch or other device to set alarms/reminders and budget time
• use highlighters and coloured pencils to mark main ideas and supporting details when studying
• use coloured sticky notes to prioritize homework, such as red to mean “due tomorrow” and green for “due next week.”

Blending nutrition and fun

Made in minutes and easy to eat on the run, Smoothies are a delicious, nutritious option for families on the go. They’re great for picky eaters and kids can have fun making them too. Choose from options such as milk or juice, ice or frozen yogurt, fresh or frozen fruit—even add a tablespoon of chia seeds, ground flax seed, or wheatgerm for extra nutrients... the possibilities are endless! Here’s a simple, kid-friendly recipe to try:

**Strawberry Banana Smoothie**

**Makes one serving. Can be doubled, tripled or quadrupled for the whole family!**

**Ingredients:**
- 1/2 banana
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- Drizzle of honey

**Directions:**
Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until combined and frothy. Serve immediately.

Helping children ‘sleep tight’

One of the most important things we can do for our children is make sure they get enough sleep. It allows their bodies to rebuild and their brains to process information so they’re ready to learn again the next day.

How much sleep is enough?

**Kids 3 to 5**
- 11-13 hours

**Kids 6 to 13**
- 9-11 hours

**Teenagers 14 & up**
- 8-10 hours

We’ve all heard the same advice for getting a good night’s sleep—setting a regular bedtime routine, avoiding big meals and caffeine close to bedtime, doing something relaxing like a warm bath/shower or reading to wind down before bed and having a cool, quiet, dark room. A good dose of exercise or physical activity during the day helps too!

Did you know that it’s also important to limit screen/device time for a good night’s rest? Scientific data has shown that the light emitted by electronics promotes wakefulness. It’s recommended to keep TVs and video games out of the bedroom and turn off all gadgets at least an hour before bed to let minds ‘power down’ too.

Fresh air fun

There are plenty of winter activities families can enjoy, so bundle up and head outdoors.
• Build a snowman
• Make snow angels
• Play snow soccer
• Go skating
• Go on a winter hike/snowshoe/cross-country ski
• Have a fort-building contest
• Go sliding or snow tubing
• Try ice fishing
• Create a winter scavenger hunt
• Have a biggest snowball contest then turn them into art with food colouring mixed with water in a spray bottle
• Collect pinecones and make them into bird feeders for your yard
Families enjoyed a spaghetti dinner at George Vanier Catholic School in Combermere, followed by a variety of math activities at a Pasta and Problem Solving night.

Students, teachers and special guests enjoyed pizza supplied by the school council at the Baby Jesus Luncheon held after Mass each year at St. Andrew’s Catholic School in Killaloe.

Our Lady of Sorrows in Petawawa ended PINK week in a very special way with Paul Headrick, Hydro One representative, presenting a cheque for new kindergarten playground equipment that will be installed in the spring. OLS School Council is also contributing $6,000 to the project.

Classes took turns rocking around the Christmas tree at Our Lady of Fatima’s Family Christmas Ball—a great community-building event held at St. Joseph’s High School in Renfrew.

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PIC workshops

Join us for a Journey from Worries to Wellness presented by the RCCDSB PIC and Renfrew County Parenting Network. Workshops will include: stress and resiliency, anxiety and depression, self-regulation, temperament, sleep disturbances, and collaborative problem solving.

March 30, 2016: St. Joseph’s High School, Renfrew
April 13, 2016: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Elementary School, Petawawa
April 27, 2016: St. Andrew’s Catholic School, Killaloe

All sessions are from 6:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. and include a Q&A with a panel of experts, strategies, tools and resources, transportation and childcare.

School council corner

At St. James Catholic School in Eganville, school council was successful with this year’s PRO Grant application focusing on health and wellness. So far, the council has sponsored an evening of Hula Hoop dancing with instructor Jamie Martin for parents and children. Next is a night of Zumba for parents and children with instructor Peter Boldt. Other evening workshops are planned with activities that will appeal to both.

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Grade 2/3 students at Holy Name Catholic School in Pembroke piloted a new robotics program.

Have questions about the PIC?

We need and welcome new members to the committee. If you want to know more about what we do, or want to join, please feel free to contact one of the committee members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazel Power, Chair</td>
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Join us

New members are always welcome to the PIC—we want representatives from across Renfrew County. If you would like to become involved, please call Hazel Power, Chair, at 613-623-9892 or email at hmitchellpower@rccdsb.edu.on.ca