

# Notebook

## New this fall in the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

*Each new school year is filled with hope and promise. This year, in alignment with Pope Francis' proclamation of a Year of Mercy, we will focus on forgiveness and unconditional love as we go about learning and growing. Many exciting opportunities await our students!*

### Pilot program prepares students for future

A new program at St. James Catholic School in Eganville and St. Andrew's in Killaloe will prepare students in the classroom for a two-day co-op placement in the workplace.

The program will focus on the four Creating Pathway Inquiry questions that help students reflect on different careers and skills as they go from K-12.

"This is a very exciting initiative that we are aligning with Aboriginal Education, Creating Pathways and Transitions Pathway (6-10)," notes Shelley Montgomery, Principal of School Effectiveness.

Grade 7/8 students will answer some survey questions to help determine their career interests, and be taught specific

learning skills required for the type of career they will be exploring.

"With 21st century teaching and learning, being more creative on how we expose our students to the workforce and the importance of being explicit about learning skills is crucial for students' engagement and success," says Montgomery.

### Religion program for 21st century learners

*Growing in Faith Growing in Christ* is a brand new religion program being introduced to RCCDSB Grade 1 students this fall. Developed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, it will eventually be rolled out to all grades up to 8. It includes new textbooks for students and new lesson plans for teachers, as well as ways for parents to help children. The program goes beyond books, using web portals, interactive and clickable exercises for use on whiteboards and tablets, DVDs, CDs and posters.

"We have our Director of Education, Michele Arbour, and Trustees to thank for committing our board to a full purchase of this program in print and digital format. I believe it will bear valuable fruit in our parish-home-school communities as it is implemented over the next few years and beyond," says Tony Cosentino, Religious and Family Life Education Resource Teacher.

### Second hockey skills academy scores high marks



With every spot filled in June, the new hockey skills academy at Bishop Smith Catholic High School is off to a blazing start. Students are enthusiastic about the new program. "It's a good opportunity to improve my hockey skills. It's fun, and I'm learning new skills off ice as well," says Grade 9 student Tristan Mulvihill.

"We're very happy to offer students the chance to join this program and work on their hockey skills and fitness, and also learn the value of sportsmanship, teamwork and hard work," says Bishop Hockey Coach Tyson Holly.



Students in Mrs. Arminen's Grade 1 class at Cathedral Catholic School stand proudly in front of the special bulletin board display they created based on their new Religious Education text.

### 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.*

# Many ways of learning in our classrooms

As a committed Catholic community, we all share a common goal—to engage our children in learning so they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. In classrooms all across our board, we are employing a wide range of initiatives and programs to support the 21st century learning needs of every child and help them to thrive.

## Inquiry based learning

Rather than being told everything they need to know, students are building their knowledge through experiences and exploration guided by teachers who provide feedback and encouragement.

Inquiry based learning supports students to become thoughtful, motivated, collaborative and innovative learners by placing their questions, ideas and observations at the centre of the learning experience.



The Grade 2/3 class at St. Andrew's Catholic School in Killaloe did an inquiry to discover what mercy means and have an example of someone who shows mercy.

## Manipulatives

Students don't learn math today the way their parents did (no more chalk boards!). Instead, they use manipulatives (small concrete or virtual objects) to experience hands-on learning of math concepts. The manipulatives allow students to connect mathematical ideas to physical objects. "Manipulatives are tangible tools that help with learning," describes Jody Weller, Principal, St. James Catholic School.

**"They help me because they help me figure out and add and count."** (Carson)



Carson, right, Grade 2/3 at St. James Catholic School in Eganville likes using manipulatives.

## Destination Imagination

The Destination Imagination program continues to provide an opportunity for students at any level to work in teams to problem solve hands-on challenges using imagination and innovation. The program complements the curriculum, and teaches 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. Students have fun learning, improve their self-confidence and build life-long friendships.



The St. John XXIII Catholic School team from Arnprior competed in the Creature Feature category at the Destination Imagination regional tournament in March.

## Technology in the classroom

The RCCDSB is constantly integrating new aspects of technology into the classroom to help prepare our students for the future. Projectors, interactive whiteboards, tablets and laptops are all used as tools to assist learning.

**"I used it to help me to know what to draw and what colours to use."** (Julia)



Julia, Grade 5/6, St. James Catholic School in Eganville, researched on an iPad for her art project.

## Extracurricular activities

There's something for everyone when it comes to extracurricular activities at our high schools, and Bishop Smith Catholic High School Student President Bailey Gibson encourages fellow students to take part.

"Getting involved doesn't only benefit your team or club, it benefits you in the long run, meeting new people and making new friends."

Some of the many clubs and activities that high school students have the opportunity to get involved in include: student council, student athletic council, social justice, pastoral, environmental action, band, auto club, sports teams, anti-bullying, radio, and more!



## Recognizing the importance of school climate

Renfrew County Catholic schools work to create safe, caring and inclusive schools characterized by warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy.

To support positive school climates, one of the many strategies used in RCCDSB schools is Restorative Practice. School staff use circles for discussions, lessons, sharing and addressing concerns.

“The circle shape implies community, connection, inclusion, fairness and equality. Restorative Practice helps children to feel connected and increases trust and cooperation among students and staff. It can also be used to restore relationships and repair harm,” says Sandy Brannan, Safe Schools Coordinator.

Every two years school boards are required to conduct school climate surveys to gather information from students and parents. This year, many of our RCCDSB schools will ask students and parents to complete the School Climate Survey. The data are collected anonymously and are used to drive the School Improvement Plan. Surveys will be made available at the school for students. Parents will be able to access their version of the survey online or can request a hard copy from the school office. All surveys will be available in October.



Students in the Kindergarten–Grade 4 class at George Vanier School in Combermere hold an outdoor circle.

## Summer learning fun

Summer learning included recreation and games, as well as the three Rs, for more than 250 students attending Our Lady of Sorrows, Petawawa, Holy Name, Pembroke, Bishop Smith Catholic High School, Pembroke, St. John Bosco, Barry’s Bay, St. James, Eganville, St. Joseph’s, Arnprior, and St. Joseph’s High School, Renfrew.

“The overall focus of summer school is to integrate literacy and numeracy activities in a fun and interactive way to engage students,” says Principal Jody Weller, program leader in the Renfrew, Arnprior and Madawaska areas.

“A strong emphasis was placed on exploring inquiry questions to help drive the learning, and provide students with a fun and engaging summer program,” adds Principal Karen Keels, who led the Pembroke and Petawawa programs.

Holy Name and St. John Bosco offered special recreation programs with a variety of activities including trips to The Shaw Woods Outdoor Education Centre, Frontier Trails Camp and Best Western Fitness Club.

In addition, 122 Grade four students took part in the fun and creativity at Crusader and Jaguar Camps. Activities included Hila science workshops, organized sports, drama activities, and 21st century learning skills based on Destination Imagination activities. All this action was fuelled by healthy snacks and culminated with a pizza party.

**Dominic, Grade 1, St. James Catholic School:**  
“One thing that was the best was science. It was really fun.”

**Wyatt, Grade 2, St. James Catholic School:**  
“We played PanAm games. I liked soccer best because I got to be goalie.”



Grade 4 students completing a fun science activity constructing a working battery using a lemon, a nail and a penny. Each student used a digital meter to measure the voltage of their lemon battery and then used their battery to power a small light.



## Catholic Graduate Expectations



A discerning believer



An effective communicator



A reflective, creative and holistic thinker



A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner



A collaborative contributor



A caring family member



A responsible citizen



## Message from the Director



An exciting new school year is upon us! In 2015–2016, we have added new programs to enhance our Board’s focus on providing students with the latest in 21st century learning and technology. These programs reflect our Board’s goal to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve their personal best in a healthy, safe and respectful environment, while growing in the love of Jesus. We offer these programs, as well as other continuing initiatives, to help prepare our students to become engaged and hope-filled citizens of the future.

Our Board also embraces the call of His Holiness Pope Francis to celebrate a Year of Mercy in 2015–2016. Our Holy Father’s guidance for us is reflected in our Board’s Vision Statement, which tells us that: “Open to mystery and endless discovery in the Lord, we are called to... unconditional love.”

And so we begin a new school year, ready and eager to face the challenges before us. Together, with open minds, healthy bodies and forgiving hearts, we can achieve much.

**Michele Arbour**



## Message from the PIC Chair



As our children and youth settle in to their new classes, maybe a new school, we welcome them back and wish them all the best for the new school year!

We, as Parents/Guardians, play such a vital role as we prepare our children to thrive and succeed within our Inclusive Catholic Education and take such pride as

we watch them grow.

The Parent Involvement Committee, along with our Trustees, Director of Education and Superintendents had the great opportunity to travel the county last year to meet with our principals and school councils to provide professional development sessions and to learn from one another. These sessions enhance communication between our parents and our Board in support of our student’s achievement and well-being. It was an incredible experience as we were able to share our stories and see firsthand the Home, School, Parish and Community connections.

This year will be another exciting year with many activities taking place within our schools.

Please check with your local school or visit the Board website to view activities and upcoming parent workshops and symposiums.

If you are interested in joining your School Council or would like to get more information please contact your school Principal.

If you would like more information on the Parent Involvement Committee or how to get involved, please contact me.

**Hazel Power**

**PIC Chair**

**hmitchellpower@rccdsb.edu.on.ca**



## Message from the Diocese



The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God’s mercy to sinners. The Catechism of the Catholic Church continues: “God created us without us: but did not will to save us without us. To receive his mercy, we must admit our faults. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not

in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 8-9).” Pope Francis has announced a Year of Mercy to be lived by all Catholics, beginning on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother on December 8, 2015. This Year of Mercy will mean nothing unless we do two things: first, acknowledge in our own lives that God is God and we are not, and that we are all redeemed sinners who are dependent on the mercy and forgiveness of God. This is the good news of the Gospel! Secondly, that our own experience and appreciation of God’s mercy in our own lives be so profound that we in turn will want to express mercy towards others. The Church has traditionally given us the *spiritual* and *corporal* works of mercy for us to put our faith into practice in real life. The *spiritual works* of mercy which attend to matters of the soul are to: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offences willingly, comfort the afflicted, and pray for the living and the dead. The *corporal* (bodily) works of mercy are to: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead. These works of mercy are given as reminders that we must attend to the spiritual works just as much as we do the physical works. When we cooperate with the grace that God bestows upon us then our spiritual life and outer actions transform mere acts of kindness into life-giving and merciful actions of Christ, risen and alive.

**Reverend G. Ryan Holly, J.C.L.**  
**Judicial Vicar**  
**Diocese of Pembroke**



## Message from the Chair



As the 2015–2016 school year gets underway, my fellow trustees and I want to thank all of you who contribute to the success of the children in our faith-based schools. The Board administration, school staff, clergy, parents, and parish members all work with us to provide the leadership and support that helps our students grow and flourish in a healthy and holy learning environment. We find great strength and courage in your support and involvement in our school communities. And for that, we give thanks.

We are proud of the programs and the opportunities that we can offer to our students to excel within a healthy, faith-based and respectful environment.

We also are mindful of Pope Francis’ call to celebrate this Year of Mercy by offering forgiveness and unconditional love to one another.

We invite everyone within our Board, homes and parishes to join us in this Year of Mercy to reflect God’s love and generosity of spirit as we help our students to learn and grow in the Catholic faith.

**Bob Michaud**