

Notebook

Celebrating our role as community builders

The end of the school year is a time of celebration as students graduate and look forward to new beginnings in the fall—next steps in their life-long journey of learning.

It is also a time to reflect on and rejoice in all we have accomplished across the RCCDSB—learning, sharing, growing, and seizing the many wonderful opportunities to *make a difference as faith-filled community builders.*

Warm wishes for a happy, safe and blessed summer. The first day back to school is September 5.

Uniting our voices for Catholic education

Dave Howard, RCCDSB Chair, addressed a gathering of parish priests, school principals and vice-principals during Catholic Education Week. During the “in conversation” meeting, Howard voiced the Board’s appreciation to the clergy for their work and support.

Howard also stressed the importance of the church and school reaffirming their commitment to Catholic education.

“In the spirit of this year’s Catholic Education Week theme, ‘Walking Forward Together’, we must go forward in unison prepared to speak up for the gift of Catholic education,” said Howard.



Our celebration of Catholic Education Week 2017

The theme of this year’s Catholic Education Week, *Walking Forward Together* highlighted the spirit of what Catholic schools are about and the blessings that are at work in our schools, homes and parishes, says Tony Cosentino, RCCDSB Religious and Family Life Education Resource Teacher.

“It’s the heart of Christ beating at the centre of our lives as members of his body, and revealing itself in our distinctive curriculum that is permeated by faith. We witnessed this in our school prayer gatherings of various kinds, school-parish Masses, beautiful artistic displays, music, in gatherings to honour our volunteers, and in works of service to the wider community,” reflects Cosentino.



Joining the discussion about the future of Catholic education



On November 14–15, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) will host a symposium, *Renewing the promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society*. The goal of the symposium is to join the Catholic community together in discussion to help understand the opportunities and challenges facing Catholic education.

Pre-conference participation will be facilitated through **thought**exchange, an online process, and more than 700 participants from across the province will attend the symposium in Toronto. Our board will be represented by a team that will report back about the discussions.

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.

Christian Community Day



Dr. Greg Wells, guest speaker, presented the ideas from his newest book, *The Ripple Effect*, to RCCDSB staff during Christian Community Day on May 19. He touched on four pillars of healthy living and wellness—sleep better, eat better, move better and think better.

Options Skilled Trades Fair

The 2017 Options Skilled Trades Career Fair marked the 15th anniversary for the event and three former RCCDSB students who are now licensed journey persons returned as part of the celebration. This shows the impact the competition has had on our students noted Tina Noel, Guidance Program Leader, Specialist High Skills Major Lead & Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program Lead, Bishop Smith Catholic High School, “We’re proud of their accomplishments.”



Thoughts from our graduates



Kane O'Malley, JK
St. Michael's Catholic School, Douglas

I like to be the star of the day. You get to lead the line.

Joseph Quinn, SK

St. Michael's Catholic School, Douglas

You get to learn stuff. I learned how to run fast. I started some more words.



Owen Bescharah

St. Michael's Catholic School, Douglas

I have lots of friends at St. Michael's, but I'm looking forward to a couple of things at St. Joseph's High School. They have good teams for sports and I want to get into the academic stream.



Fiona Larocque

St. Michael's Catholic School, Douglas

I gained a lot of confidence at St. Michael's. The teachers let us know we are all awesome in our individual ways, so I have a feeling of

being happy with who I am. I'm looking forward to the music program at St. Joseph's. Also, I already have friends there that I met at tournaments.



Ryan Boudreau

St. Joseph's High School, Renfrew, heading to Queen's for Engineering

“Everyone here at St. Joe's teaches you the value of a good work ethic and sets a good example for us as students.”



Lindsay Sherman

St. Joseph's High School, Renfrew, heading to Durham College in Oshawa for Occupational Therapy

“Going forward, all of my teachers have prepared me for college with their encouragement in class and helping with time management and teaching the importance of independent learning.”



Jaxson Stewart

St. Thomas the Apostle, Renfrew, made his first communion

“Having your first communion means you get to receive the Bread of Life for the first time. It was very special.”



Superintendent Peter Adam

Heading into retirement!

I have been truly blessed in my role as a teacher, principal and supervisory officer at the RCCDSB. I have learned so much from colleagues, friends, parents, but mostly from the most vulnerable of our students. I have learned to persevere in the face of adversity and to love, laugh and pray!

I look forward to retirement with hopeful anticipation. I will keep a prayerful watch on the RCCDSB. For those of you following my footsteps in this most honored of professions; see the face of God in every student, keep your faith in each other, and the RCCDSB will continue to have “*Schools to Believe In!*”

Congrats to our Destination Imagination 2017 participants

RCCDSB's participation in Destination Imagination this year was an enormous success, says program lead Karen Keels. Several schools participated in the Regional Tournament in Stittsville, and six teams from Bishop Smith, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Grace and St. Michael's qualified to compete at the provincial level in Toronto. Bishop Smith's Improvisation team 'Kids on the Wall', Our Lady of Sorrows' team 'The DI Mighty Stingrays',

and Our Lady of Grace's team 'Around the World' all qualified to attend the Global Finals Tournament in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"Thanks to the very generous support of community organizations and businesses, the teams were able to compete in this amazing international event," says Keels.

Throughout the week, the teams participated in challenges and activities that promote learning in the areas of

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM).

"I am thrilled that we have continued to integrate a program such as Destination Imagination to help spread innovation and the development of 21st century learning skills throughout RCCDSB and look forward to continued growth during the next school year," notes Keels.



Above: Our Lady of Grace "Around the World" team: Sarah Kosowan, Kya Ellis-Martin, Emily Kuisma, Jenna Thoms, and Bella Jamieson. Team manager Melissa Dubeau.



Above: Bishop Smith Catholic High School's "Kids on the Wall" placed an impressive 7th out of 72 global teams! From left to right: Ethan Kutschke, Anna Gleason, Jonathan Chaput, Rhea Gallant, Bridget Rielly. Team Manager April Laabs, not in photo.



Left: Our Lady of Sorrows Mighty Stingrays, placed 36 out of 87 global teams. From left to right: Kaidyn Butts, Katie Moyles (team manager), Makaila Holm, Abby Gilbert-Zapotichny, and Hope Verrier. Missing: Olivia Laird.

RCCDSB/BSCHS hosts first annual Special Olympics Festival

The Canadian Office and Professional Employee's Union (COPE) Local 103 with the support of Renfrew County Catholic District School Board and Special Olympics Ontario hosted a Special Olympics Festival on June 7 at Bishop Smith Catholic High School. COPE 103 was looking for a way to give back to the community and decided to offer our students within the Special Education Department a positive, fun-filled and memorable experience. Students from Grades 1 to 12 throughout Renfrew County enjoyed friendly competition and companionship.

Participants completed 10 activities involving catching, throwing, kicking and running skills.

"The festival provided the opportunity to develop skills and enhance physical development," notes Donna Santerre,

In addition, Santerre notes, the Special Olympics Festival brings awareness of the local Special Olympics programs that are available and perhaps entices participants to enrol and become future Special Olympians.





Message from the Director

With summer upon us, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board for your contribution to a successful school year.

During my time as Director of Education at RCCDSB, I have often marvelled at the enormous talent, expertise and dedication of our staff members, as well as the generous support and enthusiasm from our trustees, our parents, our clergy and our parish families, not to mention the community at large. Together we make a tremendous difference in the world around us as faith-filled community *builders*. Also, as I write my final message in Notebook as your Director of Education, I want to say how proud I am to have worked with all of you over the last several years.

I believe that we have accomplished a great deal as a Catholic education system and that together we truly have built a community of schools to believe in! Your efforts over the years have strengthened our ability to provide quality education that is innovative and responsive to the needs of all of our students. As I take retirement, I am very confident that the RCCDSB community of schools will enjoy continued success in 2017–2018 and the years to come.

I have very much enjoyed my time with you all at the RCCDSB. But I know that, with God's help, the best is ahead for you and for all of us. I wish you all well and God bless. Enjoy your summer and best wishes for all of you in the coming school year!



Michele Arbour,
Director of Education



Message from the PIC Chair

As we come to the close of another school year we must celebrate our Renfrew County Catholic District School Board.

From our trustees, senior staff and admin, principals, teachers, support staff, students, parents, parishes and our communities this has been another year of celebration, collaboration and commitment to our inclusive Catholic education.

If you are a follower or not yet of the Board's Facebook page or Twitter account, please take the time to view these social media pages and keep up to date with all the recent news and the incredible events, activities and opportunities within our schools and beyond.

The Ministry of Education each year provides the PIC committee and our School Councils the opportunity to apply for grants so we can host parent sessions on topics that will support our students' achievements and well-being, and also to support our parents. We welcome and appreciate your input and suggestions for topics that would benefit you as parents and guardians. This will also help our committee plan for future endeavours.

If you would like more information about the PIC committee or to voice your comments, please contact hmittchellpower@rccdsb.edu.on.ca

On behalf of the Parent Involvement Committee, I would like to wish you a very safe and happy summer.



Sincerely Yours,
Hazel Power, PIC Chair



Message from the Diocese

Vocation Time

Before we start summer vacation, let's reflect upon vocations. A vocation is a call from God that every baptized member of the Church receives. I remember vividly when I was a young student at St. James School in Eganville being visited by a religious Sister who came to speak about vocations. Sister Theresa wrote on the chalk board how everyone has a call from God: that may be a vocation to married life, consecrated life as a religious sister or brother, to priesthood or to the single state. I remember her explanation making such great sense: God has a plan for each person. Do we speak to our young people in a way that reminds them that God has a plan for their lives? Do we cultivate the idea that their talents can be used for the glory of God and lives of service? Holiness is the universal call that every one of us are called to live, and each of us needs to find out what particular vocation God has for us. The thing is that we never do this alone. We need good examples of couples who are living the Sacrament of Marriage, strong lay single persons who display lives of service, nuns, brothers and priests who show zeal and joy. We need to be deliberate and open about suggesting and supporting someone to consider a life of service in the Church. Every parent wants their child to succeed, but success does not guarantee happiness. Our deeper desire should be to see our young people grow in holiness and the joy that is found when one actively seeks out God's plan for life. I am thankful that when I was very young (kindergarten!) and spoke openly about my desire to be a priest I wasn't dismissed because of my youthfulness, but was surrounded by parents, teachers and priests who were supportive of the idea. Never underestimate your role in helping someone else discover their vocation from the Lord.



Reverend G. Ryan Holly, Our Lady of Fatima Parish,
Renfrew, Judicial Vicar, Diocese of Pembroke



Message from the Chair

At this time of year, we are all caught up in end-of-school events, graduations and other celebrations, as well as planning for summer vacations. It is a busy time for everyone. But, let me take a moment, on behalf of my fellow trustees, to offer congratulations to all of you for a successful school year, and to extend best wishes to our graduates and our retirees from the Board staff.

I want to thank each and every one of you—each teacher, principal, support and administration staff, each volunteer, parent, clergy or religious, as well as members of the larger community—for your efforts on our students' behalf.

Together we really are making a difference as faith-filled community builders. Our students benefit from your guidance, expertise and support as we all work together to build a better world for everyone around us. We understand as Catholics that to follow in the path of Jesus, we must work together with love, mercy and tolerance.

Our students at RCCDSB grow and learn in an environment that encourages each individual to achieve his or her personal best. They also learn to share their skills and talents with others in love, respect and tolerance just as Jesus has taught us.

And so, I hope that you will take time over the summer to reflect on our Catholic education system, and the opportunities and challenges that it faces in today's society. On behalf of my fellow trustees, I wish you a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you again in the 2017–2018 school year.



Dave Howard,
RCCDSB Chair