

Director's Annual Report

2023-2024

Message from the Director of Education, Mark Searson



The Director's Annual Report allows us to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've shared together. It has truly been a year filled with growth, learning, and community spirit.

I am immensely proud to be a part of our Catholic school community, where we not only educate minds but love unconditionally and nurture students' hearts in the way of Christ. Our students have shown remarkable resilience, creativity, and compassion, embodying the values we hold dear. Each day, I am inspired by their enthusiasm and dedication, as well as by the unwavering commitment of our teachers and staff.

Throughout the year, we have celebrated numerous achievements—academic excellence, school projects, and meaningful faith experiences. Together, we have fostered an environment where students can thrive, guided by the principles of our faith. We are proud to provide safe school environments characterized by warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy.

As we look ahead to the next school year, let us carry forward the spirit of unity, faith, and love that defines our community. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in shaping the lives of our young learners. I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Director's Annual Report as follows.

Schools to believe in!

About Us

Our Board offers a full range of academic programs in a caring and nurturing environment that encourages our students to achieve their personal best, while sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

Our Mission

We are an inclusive Catholic learning community called to love unconditionally and educate hearts and minds in the way of Christ.

RCCDSB by the Numbers

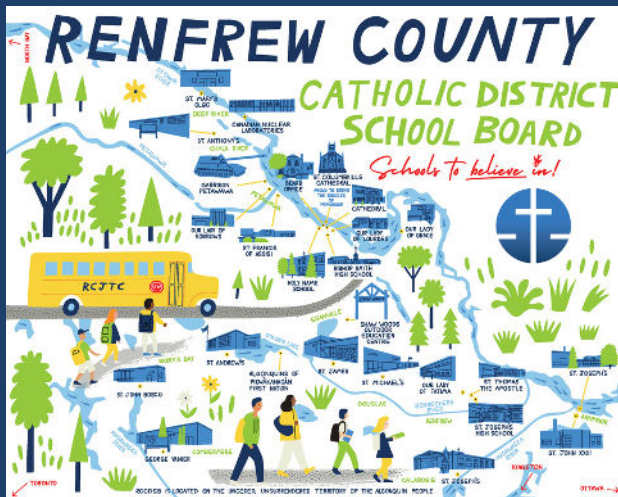
Schools and facilities:

We have 20 schools in 14 communities across Renfrew County:

- 18 Elementary Schools
- 2 Secondary Schools
- 2 Alternative Secondary Sites
- 1 Young Parent Support Program
- 1 ECCP Section 23 Valleycrest Classrooms

Communities:

Located in Eastern Ontario, 100 kilometres northwest of Ottawa, RCCDSB covers a largely rural area of more than 7,851 square km.



Our Population

Our October 31st enrolment numbers: 4,953

Employees

Permanent Staff - 633

Casual Staff - 474

Our approved 2024-2025 Budget

\$93.1 million

Leadership Team

In the RCCDSB community of schools, we care, we learn, and we work together to make our world a better place!



2023-2024 Trustees:

Elena Valliquette, Student Trustee, St. Joseph's High School; **Ben Wood**, Student Trustee, Bishop Smith Catholic High School; **Susan Artymko**, Hagarty & Richards Township, Brudenell, Lyndoch & Raglan Township, Madawaska Valley Township; **Anne Haley**, Renfrew, Horton Township, Whitewater Region Township; **Bob Schreader**, Chair, Pembroke; **David Howard**, Deep River, Laurentian Hills, Head, Clara & Maria Township, Petawawa; **Pat O'Grady**, Laurentian Valley Township, North Algona Wilberforce Township, Admaston/Bromley Township, Bonnechere Valley Township; **Harold Jerrow (Jerry) Lavalley**, Indigenous Trustee Representing the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan; **Andrew Bray**, Arnprior, McNab/Braeside Township, Greater Madawaska Township.



Administrative Team for 2023-2024:

Clint Young, Superintendent of Educational Services, **Mary Lynn Schauer**, Associate Director of Business Affairs and Treasurer; **Mark Searson**, Director of Education; **Heidi Fraser**, Superintendent of Educational Services; **Derek Lennox**, Superintendent of Educational Services.

Student Engagement & Well-Being

Mino-Pimàdiziwin Kitigàn Courtyard at Bishop Smith

In the spring of 2024, the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board proudly announced the opening of the Mino-Pimàdiziwin Kitigàn courtyard at Bishop Smith Catholic High School. After just under a year of planning and work, the courtyard is now open for students and staff to enjoy.

The courtyard project was borne out of a desire by Indigenous students to have a culturally relevant and inclusive space in which they felt a sense of safety and belonging. The Ministry of Education offered a summer learning grant to enhance engagement at the high school level. The Board's Indigenous Education Team chose to use the money for a reach-ahead credit for students entering Grade 9 and combine the wishes of secondary Indigenous students to have a cultural space and undertake a leadership credit from a project management lens to enhance and reimagine this courtyard.

Students who participated in the project were given steel-toe work boots, a certification in WHMIS, and a tool bag full of Milwaukee tools from Skills Ontario. This was also supported by the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), and 6 students who worked hard on this project received a Learning Strategies: Skills for Success (GLS) credit, and 8 students received volunteer hours towards the community service graduation requirement. Students will still have the chance to gain volunteer hours while maintaining the space by weeding, planting, staining, and more.

Creating an inclusive space for Indigenous students is beneficial for their well-being and engagement, as it acknowledges and honours their unique cultural identities, histories, and perspectives. Such spaces foster a sense of belonging, something the RCCDSB strives to provide for every student. These inclusive environments encourage cross-cultural understanding and collaboration among all students, promoting empathy and respect. Prioritizing inclusivity, student engagement, and well-being not only supports Indigenous students but enriches the entire school community, leading to a more cohesive and engaged learning atmosphere.



Catholic Graduate Expectation Awards: Self-Directed, Lifelong Learners

Throughout the school year, schools across RCCDSB hold Catholic Graduate Expectation Award Ceremonies for students who exemplify great behaviour, students who go out of their way to help others and act as Jesus would want them to act. Students are always proud to show their kindness to others and these ceremonies provide a small incentive to continue being their best selves!

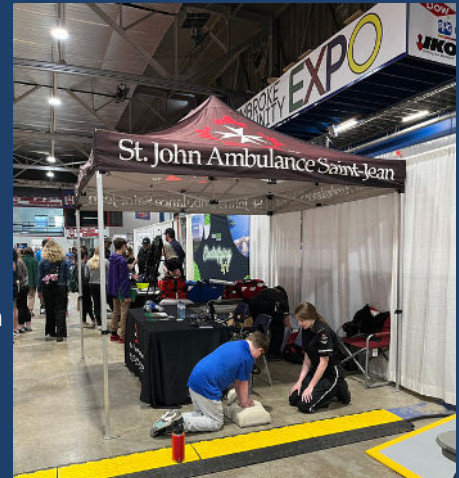
St. Michael's students at their last Catholic Graduate Expectation Ceremony of the 2023-2024 school year.

Preparation for Future Success

Experiential Learning

Options at the PMC

Every year, community partners work together to host Options at the Pembroke Memorial Centre (PMC). This event provides the opportunity for students to learn about a large variety of trades and potential career paths. Some of the skilled trades present in 2024 were nail technicians, Canadian Armed Forces, Welding, Hair Styling, baking, photography, construction, carpentry and more. The event is always successful with students from both RCDSB and RCCDSB attending and spending the day browsing potential career opportunities.

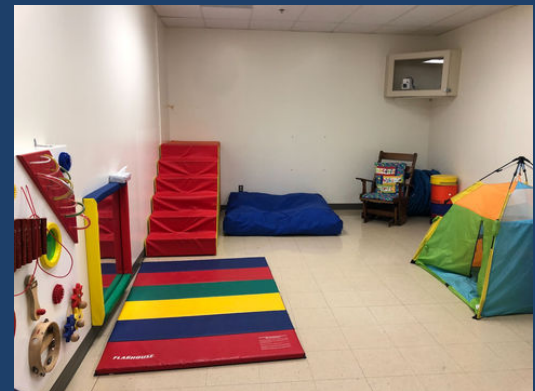


Special Education

Sensory room inspections and capacity building with SERTs, classroom teachers and EA staff

To ensure RCCDSB can provide the best spaces for our students with special needs, the Special Education team has been working closely with a contracted Occupational Therapist to ensure that sensory rooms across the system are both safe and optimally functioning. Through regular school visits, in-person and virtual professional development, educator capacity has grown around meeting the diverse and complex sensory needs of students.

Additionally, Our Lady of Fatima was pleased to introduce the new gross motor skills room, created with the assistance of their partners at CHEO. This spacious area features a swing set, rock climbing wall, stairs, slides, and mats, designed for students with physical sensory needs to engage in large body movements. The school has already witnessed the great benefits of having this room.



Accessibility Across RCCDSB

During the 2023-2024 school year, RCCDSB invested in the role of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher to provide services and support for children with hearing loss, their families, and their school teams, including liaising with audiologists.

The Accessibility Lead works with staff to help identify barriers in our schools for students with disabilities and possible solutions to make it more accessible. This started with co-leading PD sessions with educational assistants, SERT's, and Principal and Vice Principal's, along with team meetings. Leading into the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, Principals and Vice Principals will be taking this conversation back to the schools to continue the discussion with classroom teachers.

Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills

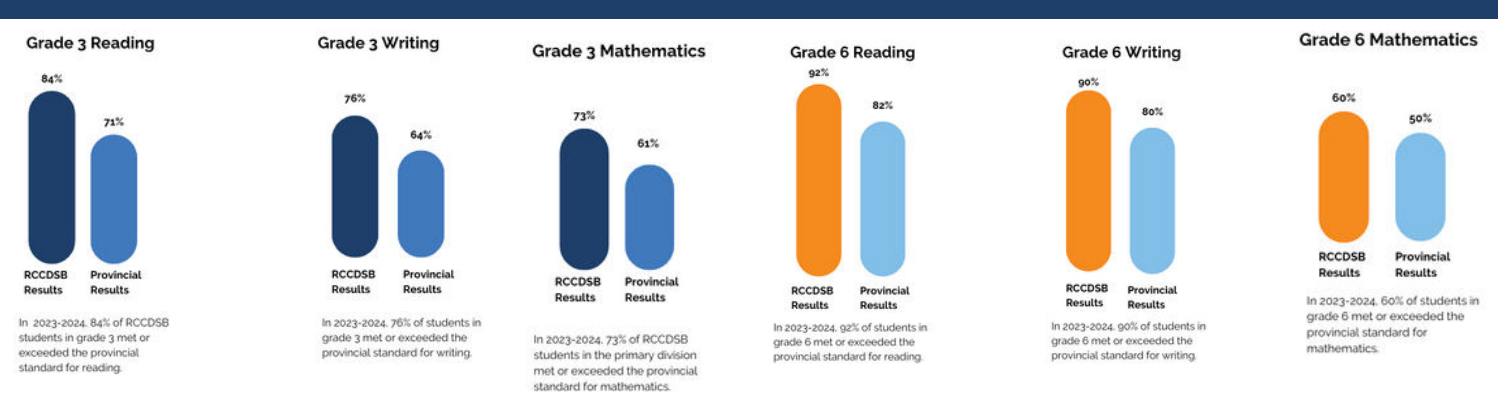
Building Thinking Classrooms

We were thrilled to welcome back Dr. Peter Liljedahl to the RCCDSB for professional learning sessions specifically tailored for our Grade 4-8 teachers, principals, and Program Team members. Dr. Liljedahl, a distinguished Mathematics professor at Simon Fraser University and a renowned consultant, engaged with our community from May 6th to 9th. Known for his pivotal contributions to educational practices, Dr. Liljedahl's primary focus was on the innovative concept of "Building Thinking Classrooms." This approach is centred on creating dynamic classroom environments that significantly enhance student engagement and encourage deep, critical thinking about mathematical concepts. Students and staff are always engaged in these lessons and Dr. Liljedahl's methods greatly benefit their academic achievement.



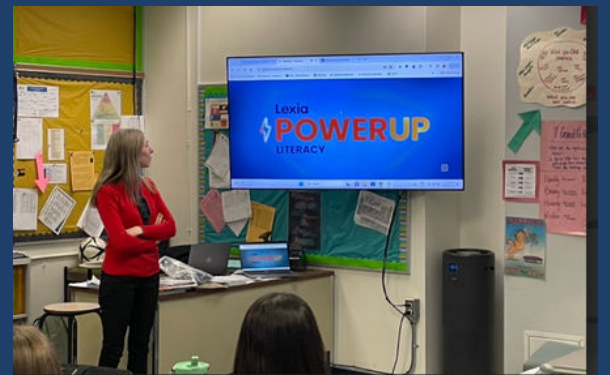
EQAO Preparation and Results

Throughout the year, students and staff work hard to prepare grade 3, 6 and 9 students to take the EQAO standardized test. In 2023-2024, students in RCCDSB surpassed provincial averages in every single subject by at least 10%, with the exception of the OSSLT, which students surpassed provincial average by 4%. This is a testament to our educators and students and proves their hard work does pay off. We are so proud of these results.



RCCDSB Literacy Journey: Lexia

During the 2023-2024 school year, selected schools embarked on a literacy journey with Greenfield Learning. This included the Lexia Core5 Reading program for Kindergarten to Grade 5 students and the Lexia PowerUp program for Grades 6-8. Each program consists of a three-part blended-learning model that incorporates individualized online learning, ongoing progress monitoring, and teacher-led intervention using scripted lessons.



Due to the success of the pilot program, RCCDSB has partnered with Greenfield Learning for the next 39 months and has purchased 1000 licenses to be used as a Tier 2 and 3 support in our schools. Some of our schools will also use Lexia as a Tier 1 resource in Grades 3 to 6.

These resources are important and help us ensure we can provide the necessary steps for student achievement and core academic skills.

Capital Projects 2023-2024

Board-Wide Sites:

- Accessibility Studies

St. Joseph's, Arnprior

- Roof Replacement

George Vanier

- Autostart Generating System
- Ventilation and Lighting Upgrades

St. Anthony's, Chalk River

- Ventilation and Lighting Upgrades

St. Michael's, Douglas

- Autostart Generating System
- Gym Flooring
- Phone PA and Bell System Upgrades

Cathedral, Pembroke

- Ventilation and lighting upgrades

Our Lady of Lourdes, Pembroke

- South Side Parking Lot Modification

Our Lady of Fatima, Renfrew

- Gym Flooring
- Roof Replacement

St. Andrew's

- Autostart Generating System
- Roof Replacement

St. John Bosco, Barry's Bay

- Gym Flooring

St. Joseph's, Calabogie

- Autostart Generating System

Holy Name, Pembroke

- Roof Replacement

Our Lady of Sorrows, Petawawa

- Sidewalks and paving
- Gym flooring

Bishop Smith CHS, Pembroke

- Watermain replacement with City of Pembroke

Our Lady of Grace

- Autostart generating System

St. Joseph's CHS, Renfrew

- Classroom Addition
- Field House

St. Thomas the Apostle

- New School Construction

St. James, Eganville

- Gym Flooring

2024-2025 Expenditure Budget:

\$93.6 Million

