

RENFREW COUNTY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board Held in the Board Room, on Monday, March 31, 2025 at 4:45 p.m.

Bob Schreader, Chair of the Board, opened the meeting with a prayer. He asked that the following people be remembered in our prayers: Paige Atherton (daughter of Rachelle Stewart, retired Teacher with the Board and sister of Belle Stewart, Educational Assistant at Bishop Smith Catholic High School), Jamie Bramburger (Interim Dean of Algonquin College, Pembroke Campus), Josh Dufour (father of Melanie Clouthier, Teacher at Holy Name School, Pembroke), and Raghavan Vijay (former Occasional Teacher for the Board and husband of Vidya Vijay, Home-Hospital Instruction Teacher for the Board).

Mr. Schreader then acknowledged the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

RESOLUTION #1

Moved by Bob Schreader

Seconded by Jeannie Ivory

That Trustees move into In-Camera Committee in Committee of the Whole.

...Carried

RESOLUTION #2

Moved by Pat O'Grady

Seconded by Susan Artymko

That Trustees move out of In-Camera Committee in Committee of the Whole.

...Carried

ROLL CALL

Present:	Chairperson	- Bob Schreader
	Vice Chairperson	- David Howard
	Trustees	- Susan Artymko - Anne Haley (virtual) - Jeannie Ivory - Jerry Lavalley - Pat O'Grady
	Student Representative	- Ben Wood - James Russett
	Director of Education	- Mark Searson
	Associate Director of Business Affairs & Treasurer	- Mary Lynn Schauer
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Clint Young
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Heidi Fraser
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Derek Lennox
	Recording Secretary	- Nancy Levasseur
	Manager of Plant Services	- Ian Byce (Items A to H.3)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESOLUTION #3

Moved by Jeannie Ivory

Seconded by David Howard

That the Agenda for the March 31, 2025 General Meeting of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board be approved.

...Carried

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION #4

Moved by Anne Haley

Seconded by Pat O'Grady

That the Minutes of the General Meeting of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board held in the Board Room on Monday, February 24, 2025 at 4:45 p.m. be approved.

...Carried

DISBURSEMENT LIST

RESOLUTION #5

Moved by Pat O'Grady

Seconded by Jerry Lavalley

That the listing of payments as shown on MAR2 be approved as presented.

...Carried

PRESENTATION

2024 – 2025 Enrolment Register

Clint Young, Superintendent of Educational Services, Tammy Peplinskie, School and Attendance Counsellor, and Lisa Coulas, Financial Analyst, provided information on the importance of accurate student enrolment and attendance recording for funding purposes. Clint Young emphasized that while marking attendance seems simple, proper coding requires a team effort.

It was clarified that principals are responsible for maintaining these records, while School Attendance Counsellors enforce compulsory attendance for students aged 6-17 (unless excused). The presenters reviewed Ministry-approved attendance codes, including the "C" code (absence with successful family communication and SAC referral between the 11th and 16th absence day) and the criteria for a "G" code (General

Absence), specifically discussing the ambiguous nature of "cultural" days and whether activities like hunting, hockey, and farming in Renfrew County should be considered as such. Bob Schreader requested further discussion on the definition of "cultural" days at the next Educational Services Committee meeting.

Lisa Coulas stressed the critical link between accurate attendance data and funding calculations, especially during the reporting periods of October 31st, March 31st, and June 30th, and in cases of prolonged absences.

The team is developing an Attendance Toolkit and providing ongoing professional development, with an "Attendance Matters" campaign planned for September.

Bob Schreader thanked the presenters, acknowledging the complexity and significant implications of student absences.

NEW BUSINESS

Retirements

RESOLUTION #6

Moved by Susan Artymko

Seconded by David Howard

That the Board accept the following retirements with regret:

- Susan Kunopaski, Caretaker, effective June 30, 2025; and
- Karen Tracey, Educational Assistant and Early Childhood Educator at St. James School, Eganville, effective August 31, 2025.

...Carried

Second Entrance – Bishop Smith Catholic High School

The Board will be making a presentation to Pembroke City Council tomorrow evening regarding the proposal for a second entrance for Bishop Smith CHS. Bob Schreader, Mark Searson, Mary Lynn Schauer, Ian Byce, Justin Jeffrey (RCJTC), Mike Fadock (Planner, Jp2g) and Julie Huckabone will attend on behalf of the Board.

Bob Schreader reported that a community consultation was held a week ago at the school. About forty people attended and at that time, they were asked for their comments on the proposal to develop a second vehicular/pedestrian entrance to the school, accessed via Horace Street. There were 14-15 positive comments received plus 1 negative comment, The bus operators also support the proposal. Bob said he is cautiously optimistic that the unsafe situation can be rectified at BSCHS.

Information that was sent to the City in advance of the presentation was also provided to the trustees for their information.

Roofing Proposals – Bishop Smith CHS, Pembroke and St. Michael's, Douglas

A report from the Board's Consultant, Garland Canada Inc., was provided on roofing projects for Bishop Smith CHS and St. Michael's School, Douglas. Ian Byce said that the roofs we are replacing are over twenty years old. Two of the Bishop Smith roofs are moving water right now and the work needs to be done. A drain will be added as well, as there are only two drains for the whole back section.

RESOLUTION #7

Moved by David Howard

Seconded by Pat O'Grady

That the Board award the roofing tenders as per the recommendation of the Board's Consultant, Garland Canada Inc, as follows:

- That the tender for the roofing at Bishop Smith Catholic High School (Section 3.1 roof replacement, Sections 4.0, 4.1 and 4.2 Peel and Replacement), be awarded to J.G. Fitzgerald & Sons Ltd., for a total cost of \$690,289.00 + HST; and
- That the tender for the roofing at Bishop Smith Catholic High School (Section 2.0 roof replacement) be awarded to J.G. Fitzgerald & Sons Ltd., for a total cost of \$394,572.00 + HST; and
- That the tender for the roofing at St. Michael's School, Douglas (Sections 1.0, 1.1, 2.0 roof replacement) be awarded to Simluc Contractors Ltd., for a total cost of \$637,613.00 + HST.

...Carried

GOOD NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Pembroke Schools

Bob Schreader, local Trustee, reported on activities taking place in the Board's Pembroke schools.

Cathedral

- Student Council organized creative initiatives during February and March which included a themed book exchange, Freeze Dance, a 100 Days of School celebration and Jersey Day
- The school had a successful Winter Carnival where students enjoyed a variety of fun activities including building the tallest snow fort, snow art, snowshoeing, swimming at Kinsmen Pool for Grades 3-6, and visiting local attractions such as the Shaw Woods, the Renfrew Cinema and the Bakery. The carnival ended with cocoa, fruit treats, reading time and playing board games
- Students returned from March Break to a sea of Irish green as the school embraced St. Patrick's Day with themed activities including limericks, fiddle jamming, step-dancing and a door decorating contest
- Father Do welcomed staff and students for a special Ash Wednesday Liturgy of the Word at the church. Father also had an Ash Wednesday prayer service with

the JK/SK and Grade 1-2 classes. The school also kicked off its Lenten Food Drive to support the local food bank

- Kindergarten students, led by Mrs. Holt, have been engaged in their Math centers, focusing on number bonds and the concept of making 10. They have also made great progress in reading with the UFLI program and enjoyed heart word activities during their center time
- Grade 1-2 students learned from Elder Patrick Aird, from Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, who spoke about his experiences growing up on the trapline and shared cultural artifacts such as furs, housing models and regalia pieces
- The Grade 2-3 students in Ms. Armenin's class are learning about various health conditions in their health and physical education class
- Students showed their support for Epilepsy Awareness Day by wearing purple on March 26th
- Ms. Brown has been teaching students how to use the Lexia Reading program, which has aided in the success of making reading fun while improving students' reading levels
- The Cathedral Bear Cubs met the BSCHS Bears when the Grade 6 students participated in orientation day at BSCHS. It was well organized, faith-filled and full of hands-on activities

Holy Name

- The winter season was filled with active and vibrant learning and teachers and students embraced the beautiful weather, taking lessons outdoors for science, geography and weather studies. The Winter Carnival was held at the Alice & Fraser Recreation Center where students enjoyed skating, sliding, snowshoeing and gingerbread decorating. Volunteers provided homemade chili after a day of outdoor fun
- Ash Wednesday Mass, led by Father Beachey, brought the community together to reflect on the message of almsgiving, inspiring meaningful actions throughout Lent.
- In February, students benefited from enriching educational experiences, including workshops from Let's Talk Science and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario Dairy Education Program. Thanks to Canadian Tire Jumpstart, students were able to participate in a ringette program that promotes teamwork and physical activity in an inclusive environment. Under the guidance of Ms. Burns and Ms. Sandrelli, the student council wrapped up the month with a successful Art Show

Our Lady of Lourdes

- The school community came together for Shrove Tuesday, enjoying pancakes provided by the School Council
- The school celebrated St. Patrick's Day with lively celebrations when they returned from March Break
- Students have been participating in Manie Musicale, an annual, bracket-style music competition that infuses excitement into French language learning. By using popular Francophone songs, it creates an immersive experience where students actively engage with the language. This "March Madness" style

tournament makes learning fun and relevant, exposing students to diverse Francophone cultures while reinforcing vocabulary and comprehension

- The school observed Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of Lent
- At the end of February, students learned and played ringette with equipment funded by Canadian Tire Jumpstart, a fantastic boost for the school's sports programs that is inclusive to all students
- The March prayer service at Our Lady of Lourdes featured the presentation of the Effective Communicator awards, recognizing student achievement in this Catholic Graduate Expectation

INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Business and Corporate Services Committee Report

Committee Chair, Anne Haley, reported on the meeting held March 17, 2025.

Community Use of Schools – Request for Waiver of Rental Fees – Deep River Summermusic Day Camp has requested an exemption of rental fees for their use of St. Mary's School, Deep River from July 11-July 25. This camp has been held at the school since 2006 (2020 and 2021 excepted) and the camp has benefitted from a user fee exemption every year since 2011.

RESOLUTION #8

Moved by Pat O'Grady

Seconded by Jerry Lavalley

That the Board approve the request from the Deep River Summermusic Day Camp for an exemption of rental fees for their use of St. Mary's School, Deep River from July 11-July 25, 2025. Insurance will be paid by the group.

...Carried

Community Use of Schools – Request for Exemption of Rental Fees – The Friends of the Regional Pool requested an exemption of rental fees for their use of Cathedral School, Pembroke for a fundraising event on Sunday, March 23, 2025.

RESOLUTION #9

Moved by Pat O'Grady

Seconded by Jerry Lavalley

That the Board approve the request from the Friends of the Regional Pool, for an exemption of rental fees for their use of Cathedral School, Pembroke, on Sunday, March 23, 2025 for a fundraising event. Insurance to be paid by the group.

...Carried

Community Use of Schools – An updated summary of scheduled use of schools from September 2024 to August 2025 was provided as an information item.

Educational Services Committee Meeting Report

Pat O’Grady, Committee Chair, reported on the meeting held March 17, 2025.

Presentation – MAAP Update – Derek Lennox provided an update on MAAP (Math Achievement Action Plan). He gave a behind the scenes look at school and attendance data and the attitudinal piece on how our students are achieving.

- 73% of our teachers continue to access our Board resources on a continuous basis
- 74% of students attended 90% or more days, an increase from the previous year
- There has been a significant amount of professional development in math for our teachers
- Doing significant work in literacy will also help with math scores...if you can’t read you can’t do math
- There is unanimous confirmation that the use of Board diagnostics has increased benefits to our students

Board Programs and Information –

- a) **March Mental Health & Wellness Newsletter** – This was an information item.
- b) **Teacher Meeting – Best Practices & Resource Sharing** – This was an information item.
- c) **Indigenous Education Update** – Derek Lennox shared some Indigenous Education highlights:
 1. The meeting times for the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee have been changed from once a month at 4:00 p.m. to full-day meetings 4 times per year. Already, there has been an increase in the number of members that attended the first full-day meeting.
 2. A Student Voice Forum has been established at both the elementary and secondary levels. We have been able to collect great information that has been incorporated into our Board Action Plan. At the secondary level, there is a land-based credit opportunity. We are piloting this in September 2025 in partnership with the RCDSB. It will be for students in credit deficit in conjunction with elders and community members.
 3. The Renfrew County Administrators’ Group is a group of representatives from RCCDSB, RCDSB, Family & Children’s Services, Algonquin College, RCDHU, City of Pembroke, Pembroke Regional Hospital and the County of Renfrew. At their initial meeting, their first initiative was to work on reconciliation throughout the county.
- d) **School Year Calendar – Ministry Approval** – This was the final piece of the Ministry approval process. We have met all requirements within Ministry guidelines.
- e) **Student Support Newsletter** – This was an information item.

- f) **PPM170 Policy – Communication with Parents & Guardians** – Mark Searson provided an update on the revisions required for the policy on PPM170.

RESOLUTION #10

Moved by David Howard

Seconded by Jeannie Ivory

That the Board approve the revisions to the Communications with Parents and Guardians policy, as presented.

...Carried

OCSTA – Copyright & Fair Dealings Awareness Week – February 24-28, 2025 – This was an information item.

Special Education Advisory Committee Report

Susan Artymko, Committee Chair, reported on the meeting held March 5, 2025.

Presentation – Accessibility at RCCDSB – Katherine McLaughlin, one of the Board's Special Education Coordinators, spoke to the committee on accessibility at the RCCDSB. She explained that the Board is committed to establishing an Accessibility Working Group, consulting with people with disabilities and community-based agencies that advocate on behalf of those with disabilities; ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility; and improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

This past Fall, James Allen, a grade 9 student at BSCHS, was asked to become the Student Representative for Accessibility with part of his role being communication with students and being the eyes and ears at the school level. He gave the committee the "Top 10 Tips of Inclusion at School/In the Classroom" –

1. Don't assume; what you see isn't always what you get
2. Always communicate; it's the only way to be sure
3. Take the time to listen; listening is the first step in learning
4. Empathy is key; put yourself in someone else's shoes
5. Don't categorize; everyone is different, uniquely
6. Be an enabler; saying yes leads to success
7. Plan for accessibility; make it a priority from the start
8. Be supportive; positivity is inspiring
9. Teach inclusion to everyone; it is important for all
10. Treat everyone equally; everyone is capable of great things

Katherine showed the committee the Board's website, the Accessibility Plan and the Annual Status Report and highlighted various aspects of these three documents and how they align with making the board more accessible for everyone. She also detailed the methods used by the Board with AIDE (accessibility, inclusion, diversity and equity)

and the AIDE Inclusive Events Checklist, which helps to make events more inclusive for everyone. Some of the events/programs the Board is working on include parasport sitting volleyball, ringette and the Lexia reading program which focuses on equitable reading opportunities.

The Board is looking at reviewing our Board policy and updating some of our employee training to meet AODA standards. High school workshops on inclusion will be held in the spring, in partnership with Community Living. National Accessibility Week is May 25-31, 2025 and Grade 6-8 students from different schools will come together to have a Student Forum on accessibility.

Board Reports:

- a) ***OCSTA Memo – Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education*** – This was an information item with highlights of the June 2024 meeting, EQAO update, kindergarten update from the Ministry, Ontario Autism Program update and the 2023-2024 Annual Report from the Council.
- b) ***Ottawa Catholic School Board Letters to the Minister of Education*** –
 - Inadequate Funding & EA Shortage – this letter was prepared by the Chair of the SEAC group from the Ottawa Catholic School Board regarding inadequate funding and EA shortages. The Chair of our SEAC group will decide whether to write a letter or not.
 - Ontario SEAC Advisory – this letter is a reminder to all SEAC members of the core job of SEAC and recommends that we all stand together across the province and be an advocate for our students. They are also asking that we send our own letter to the Ministry.
- c) ***PPM128: RCCDSB Code of Conduct Policy – Parent Feedback*** – In July 2024, the Ministry of Education issued some major revisions to this policy. The major focus was on three topics – cell phone use in the schools, social media sites and very strict anti-vaping rules. Our Board has a draft policy ready but we are required to get feedback from the community, including staff, parents and students. If any member of SEAC has heard any feedback regarding these policies, they are asked to let the Board know by the next meeting in April.
- d) ***2025-2026 Support Allocation Memo*** – This memo has gone out to our school teams and they are now completing student rubrics for students that may need special support. These are due by the end of March and then an analysis will be done by the team members who will determine the support required for each school. By our June meeting, we should be able to let the committee know the EA allotment for the 2025-2026 school year.
- e) ***Special Education Report – Homework*** – The committee has had no feedback on Sections A & B, and are now asked to look through C & D and come back to us at our April meeting with any changes/questions they have regarding these two sections of the report.

Next Meeting Date – The next meeting date is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Secondary School Report – Bishop Smith CHS, Pembroke

Ben Wood, Student Trustee, reported on events happening at Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke.

Student Council

- Rock Your Socks Day was held on March 21st in support of World Down Syndrome Day
- Blue and Gold Day was held on March 8th
- Wear Green Day was held on March 17th for St. Patrick's Day
- Twin Day took place on the 27th of March

Athletics

- The varsity girls' hockey team competed in the EOSSAA championships
- The student vs teacher hockey game was held on March 7th and the students won the game

Students

- The Grade 11-12 construction classes and the Grade 10 careers class travelled to the Petawawa Research Forest and the Shaw Woods Lumber Mill on March 27th to learn about jobs in the lumber and forestry industries
- Senior science students travelled to CNL on March 25th for a tour and talks about future careers

Pastoral

- Pancakes were served the morning of Shrove Tuesday
- Ash Wednesday was observed by the staff and students

OCSTA Information Items

Bob Schreader brought the trustees' attention to information recently received from OCSTA.

- a. Catholic Education Pilgrims of Hope Bulletin March 2025
- b. Memo – Election Platform Commitments 2025 – An OCSTA Lobby Day will be held on April 29th to meet new MPPS and Ministers
- c. Memo – Catholic Education Week – May 4-9, 2025 – Ontario Catholic Student Youth Day will be celebrated on May 7th with a virtual event centered on the Pilgrims of Hope theme
- d. 2025 OCSTA Awards – Our trustee Dave Howard will be honoured with the Trustee Award of Merit at the AGM in May
- e. Upcoming Focus Group Sessions – Parent Caregiver Resources for Student Mental Health
- f. Memo – Doug Ford New Cabinet Members – Paul Callandra is the new Minister of Education
- g. Catholic Education Pilgrims of Hope Bulletin April 2025

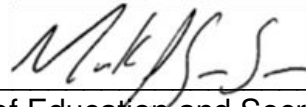
RESOLUTION #12

Moved by Anne Haley
Seconded by Susan Artymko
That the meeting be adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

...Carried



Chairperson, Renfrew County Catholic
District School Board



Director of Education and Secretary, Renfrew
County Catholic District School Board

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April 11, 2025