

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, October 27, 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: Sheila Purdy (Zadow) (retired Educational Assistant at Our Lady of Sorrows School, Petawawa), Tom Egan (former Trustee of the Board from 1971 to 1991), Marilyn Moran (mother of Krystal Moran, Educational Assistant at Our Lady of Fatima School, Renfrew), Gary Trembinski (Trustee on the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board), Margaret Gormley (retired Board Office employee), Teresa Ann Bowes mother of Martha Lapierre, Teacher at Cathedral School, Pembroke and wife of the late Brian Bowes, former Principal at Our Lady of Lourdes School, Pembroke) and Phil Rocco (former Director of Education, Ottawa Catholic School Board).

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

RESOLUTION #1

Moved by Susan Artymko
Seconded by Pat O'Grady
That Trustees move into In-Camera Committee in Committee of the Whole.
...Carried

RESOLUTION #2

Moved by Jeannie Ivory
Seconded by Bob Schreader
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 - Jeannie Ivory - Pat O'Grady
	Student Representative	- James Russett - Venezia Baltazar
	Director of Education	- Mark Searson
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Clint Young
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Heidi Fraser
	Superintendent of Educational Services	- Derek Lennox
	Controller of Business Services	- Megan Lemmon
	Recording Secretary	- Nancy Levasseur

Regrets: Trustees - Anne Haley
 Associate Director of Business Affairs & Treasurer - Jerry Lavalley
 - Mary Lynn Schauer

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESOLUTION #3

Moved by David Howard
 Seconded Pat O'Grady
 That the Agenda for the October 27, 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 Jeannie Ivory
 Seconded by Susan Artymko
 That the Minutes of the General Meeting of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board held in the Board Room, on Monday, September 29, 2025 at 4:45 p.m. be approved.
 ...Carried

DISBURSEMENT LIST

RESOLUTION #5

Moved by David Howard
 Seconded by Susan Artymko
 That the listing of payments as shown on OCT2 be approved as presented.
 ...Carried

PRESENTATION

Cyber Security Month

Gabriel Cloutier, Manager of Technology and Security Services, attended the meeting to provide an update on cyber security measures that are being implemented to protect the Board's systems, networks and programs from digital attacks. These attacks are usually aimed at accessing, changing or destroying sensitive information. He explained that there are many types of cyber attacks, including malware, phishing and ransomware.

Cyber attacks are increasing in frequency and sophistication. Gabe referred to a number of reports (PowerSchool, cyber incidents at other schools boards) as examples of how every organization is vulnerable. The potential consequences of a successful attack are severe (data loss, financial damage, reputational harm).

Our solution is to build a strong defence by implementing robust security measures such as firewalls, antivirus software and strong passwords. We also have mandatory cyber security awareness training for staff. In 2024-2025, 87.9% of our assigned staff received this training and the goal is to have all staff undergo this training. We have developed an incident response plan and test it at regular intervals and our team does continuous monitoring and vulnerability assessments.

Cyber Security Ontario has been integrated into the Board's MyApps portal for easy staff access and lesson planning. Phishing awareness tests are also done to help measure staff and stakeholders' ability to detect cyber threats effectively. The IT Department has also participated in cyber breach tabletop exercises enhancing practical response preparedness. Outreach efforts have been done to promote cyber safety resources for parents and staff through sessions and communications.

Recently, RCCDSB staff attended an AI summit, where 3 one-hour sessions were held, introducing cybersecurity training for staff to benefit work and home use.

Since October 2025, the Board has managed 3,820 security incidents, showing strong response capabilities. Regular meetings with ECNO, CSOM, CSCoE and OSBIE help to enhance system defenses and align initiatives. Technical security enhancements are implemented as well, with Patch Manager updates and BitLocker encryption on over 95% of devices to ensure strong data protection.

In conclusion, Gabe reinforced that cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility. By taking proactive steps, we can mitigate the risks of cyberattacks. Protecting our digital world requires a collective effort.

Bob Schreader thanked Gabe for updating the trustees on the measures that are being taken to protect the Board against cyber attacks. The trustees appreciate all the work that is being done to secure our digital environment.

NEW BUSINESS

Nomination of Board Chair & Vice-Chair

Trustees were asked to advise Dave Howard, Chair of the Nominating Committee, if they wish to nominate someone for Chair and/or Vice-Chair for the Inaugural Meeting on November 17, 2025.

Letter of Endorsement – City of Pembroke Sidewalks

Over the last number of years, the Board has submitted letters to the City of Pembroke, advocating for sidewalks in Pembroke, particularly along Clemow and Irving streets in the vicinity of Our Lady of Lourdes School. Mark reported that this has obviously borne fruit, as the City is now applying for a grant to do the work. We have provided a letter of support for their application and the RCJTC also provided data regarding the number of vehicles that will be eliminated in the area due to a greater number of students who will be able to walk safely to school.

Bob Schreader said this is very good news as sidewalks are certainly needed there. It is a safety issue, especially with the daycare that will be operating at Lourdes school.

GOOD NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Renfrew Schools

In Anne Haley's absence, Jeannie Ivory reported on activities taking place at the Board's Renfrew schools.

St. Thomas the Apostle, Renfrew

- The school recently celebrated the new school's Grand Opening and the past two months have been a joyful transition as students and staff settled into the new space. The school community has focused on making the new building feel like home by adding warm, personal touches to classrooms and common areas
- Students and staff put immense effort into a successful food drive and a Thanksgiving prayer service
- For their Terry Fox fundraiser, the school embraced online donations while Grade 6 students shared daily facts over the announcements. The school community then did a track run, capping off their successful campaign by "pie-ing" four staff members, including the principal, for meeting their fundraising goal
- A huge congratulations to all of the cross-country runners who ran through the rain and cold at the Arnprior Optimist Cross Country Meet. Mrs. Forgie and Mrs. Richards, along with all staff and students, are proud of the students' hard work and thank students for a great cross-country season

Our Lady of Fatima, Renfrew

- The school hosted a successful Book Fair and Open House on October 16, inviting families to explore classrooms, meet staff and celebrate the close-knit school community
- Students also participated in the Terry Fox Run/Walk, dressing in red and white to show their support
- Students also demonstrated their spirit during the Board-wide Attendance Spirit Week, enjoying themed days such as PJ Day, Silly Sock Day, Bright Colour Day, Whimsical Hair Day and Professional Day.

INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Business and Corporate Services Committee Report

David Howard, Alternate Committee Chair, reported on the meeting held October 6, 2025.

Transportation Update – There were no bus cancellations for the week ending October 3, 2025.

Reporting Child Abuse & Criminal Offences Policy – Clint Young provided an update on this policy. All suspected child abuse of an Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation child or youth are to now be reported to the Nigig Nibi Ki-win Gamik Society.

RESOLUTION #6

Moved by Jeannie Ivory

Seconded by Pat O’Grady

That the Board approve the revised Reporting Child Abuse and Criminal Offences policy as presented.

...Carried

Attendance at Board & Committee Meetings Policy and Rules of Procedure – Board of Trustees Policy – Mark Searson provided an update on this policy.

RESOLUTION #7

Moved by Susan Artymko

Seconded by Pat O’Grady

That the Board approve the Attendance at Board & Committee Meetings policy and the amendment to the Rules of Procedure – Board of Trustees policy as presented.

...Carried

Community Use of Schools – A summary of the Community Use of Schools for the school year starting September 1/25 to August 31/26 was provided as an information item.

Educational Services Committee Meeting Report

Committee Chair, Pat O’Grady, reported on the meeting held October 6, 2025.

Presentation – School Improvement Planning 2025-2026 – Dave Noble and Karen Keels attended the meeting to outline the Board’s comprehensive strategy for driving the School Improvement Plan (SIP) or School Achievement Plan (SAP) and enhancing

the role of principals as instructional leaders. The process is guided by the School Achievement Plan which has three core priorities mandated by the Ministry – Achievement of Learning Outcomes, Preparation for Future Success and Improvement of Student Well-Being.

Resources have been strategically placed to address achievement gaps, which include Lexia Reading Software, Early Reading Enhancement, Educator Support and Attendance Threshold.

Step 1 involves knowing the learner – gathering all the numbers and facts (test scores, attendance, grades, etc.) to try to build a complete, detailed picture of how well the students are achieving. The data needs to be broken down into small groups to see if a problem exists for only one group of students or if the problem is caused by something built into the school system itself, such as policy, curriculum choices, etc.).

Step 2 is about focusing. This requires developing a Theory of Action that links changes in adult practice to desired student outcome. The SIP goals must align with provincial imperatives and RCCDSB investment strategies. Literacy goals target essential reading components while numeracy goals emphasize conceptual understanding and high-impact instructional practices.

Steps 3-4 involve new learning and taking action. Successful School Achievement Plan implementation requires building collective capacity through targeted professional development and systemic action deployment. The Collaborative Inquiry process ensures shared responsibility for instructional improvement.

Steps 5-6 – Checking – Monitoring Fidelity and Impact – the final phase requires systematic monitoring of both implementation quality (fidelity) and student outcomes (impact). Multi-level fidelity checks ensure interventions are delivered as designed while progress monitoring tracks goal achievement.

Karen Keels outlined the strategy to help principals transition from “building managers” to instructional leaders by embedding support through a new structure. This includes Principal Development Focus, Leadership Learning Communities and the role of the program team in being available to meet with principals and teachers, and providing guidance on goals.

A practical example was used to illustrate the process using a specific goal “increase Grade 2 students accurately decoding words”.

Student Success & Support Newsletter – The September 2025 newsletter was shared with Board staff.

Student Success & Support Newsletter – The October 2025 newsletter is to be shared with all parents.

Retired Teacher Community Grant – This is a grant that our Board can apply for, where each high school could receive \$500.

October 10, 2025 PA Day – All staff will gather at St. Joseph's High School for a PA Day focusing on Artificial Intelligence. Dave Noble is taking the lead on this and it has been a huge undertaking. There will be a variety of workshops that people can attend and the guest speaker is Tom D'Amico, recently retired Director of Education for the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Secretary Training PA Day – This was an information item outlining the structure of the PA Day.

Algonquin College OPSEU Labour Action Impact on Secondary Students – Heidi Fraser provided an update regarding the ongoing OPSEU labour action and its impact on secondary-level dual credit programming in partnership with Algonquin College (Pembroke and Ottawa campuses).

One dual credit course (Psychology) was moved to an online format due to initial concerns about students crossing the picket line. Administration has been working with the RCDSB and the College to navigate the situation and is now seeking to transition the course back to in-person delivery. A formal communication regarding the return to in-person learning, including the possibility of crossing a picket line, will be issued to families.

The October intake for OYAP Level 1 courses (Electrical and Construction), which require hands-on, integrated learning, is proceeding in person. Families were contacted and asked to choose whether to participate, noting the potential to cross a picket line. All three enrolled students confirmed their participation. Programs such as "Jill of All Trades" and "Other World Choice Days" have been temporarily put on hold.

New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) Update – Heidi Fraser provided an update on the status of the New Teacher Induction Program, which is led by Principal Tina Brown-McGrath. The program targets teachers in their first or second year of employment, including those in long-term occasional (LTO) roles or new permanent positions. The first two sessions for the current cohort, consisting of approximately 10 teachers at a time, have taken place and the program is well underway. A second intake of the program is planned for February to onboard new hires, such as those filling maternity leaves.

Ministry Communication – September 2025 – A recent Ministry memo was reviewed, which covered several items, including cyber awareness, fraud guidelines and directives concerning student volunteer work. The Volunteer Hours discussion covered the recent addition of a leveled certificate indicating the amount of hours a student has volunteered. A question was raised by Bob Schreder regarding how these hours will be formally recognized at graduation ceremonies. Heidi confirmed that this is being determined and that the current expectation is that the recognition will be in place by the

relevant graduation date. The Committee noted the importance of alignment across the Eastern Region's Student Success Teams to ensure a shared understanding of what constitutes an eligible community service hour. This alignment will also extend to the coterminous boards to maintain consistency in approval processes.

Special Education Advisory Committee Report

Susan Artymko, Committee Chair, reported on the meeting held October 8, 2025.

Presentation – New ABA Programs & Supports – Brittany Yach and Josh Nokes, reported that recent Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) regulatory changes have necessitated an alignment of our services with new provincial guidelines. A review of our caseload indicated that a significant portion of our Special Education students, 25% in kindergarten and 55% in Primary (K-3), could benefit from targeted early intervention. This data prompted the development of a new initiative that focuses on proactive skill building in the earliest grades. We are presenting a comprehensive set of service changes to school teams, including the shift toward providing PDF copies of consultation summaries directly to them. This new process is designed to reduce barriers, ensure more timely communication and help improve family communication by also sending a copy home with the team's contact information.

The most significant change to our service model is the launch of the K-2 Skills Connection program. This new pilot aims to proactively address foundational student needs in the early years (K-2) by emphasizing skill development, moving beyond the previous model of solely offering advice. An Applied Behavior Analysis Educational Assistant (ABA EA) now supervises and works directly with the student and the class team in the classroom for approximately six weeks. With parental permission, an assessment identifies three student strengths and three needs, with one priority area chosen for direct support. No formal diagnosis is required; students qualify if the school team needs assistance with a goal. The program has been met with the highest level of teacher participation and enthusiasm to date, with educators observing a positive difference in their classrooms.

Initial data from the program validates the need for this proactive focus on social and behavioral skills, highlighting critical areas of concern, such as 70% of students did not demonstrate awareness of their own space and 83% of students did not appropriately handle the response "No".

To enhance accessibility and consistency, the team has also introduced Virtual Open Office Hours every Tuesday morning, allowing staff to schedule a time to speak with the team. This option is designed to reduce wait times for recommendations, cut down on phone and email tag and potentially reduce the number of formal referrals. Furthermore, Scheduled Visits have been formalized by assigning each ABA EA ten schools and promising a visit once every two weeks. The ABA Specialists (Josh and Brittany) commit to at least one contact per month. This dual approach allows the team to effectively

trriage urgent needs while maintaining a consistent schedule, ensuring that we deliver reliable support and continue to focus on consistent delivery for our current students' transition plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPs). All services are now time based with parent permission valid until August 31st, which ensures adequate time for transition planning over the summer before a case is officially closed.

October 10th PA Day – Staff are gathering at St. Joseph's High School in Renfrew to learn more about Artificial Intelligence.

EA Allocation – All EA assignments have been finalized. We currently have 118 EAs assigned to specific schools and two EAs who will serve as an additional resource. This allows us to maintain flexibility and quickly allocate support to any school that receives a new student requiring an EA throughout the academic year.

2025-2026 Special Education Plan – A critical function of SEAC is the annual submission of the Special Education Plan to the trustees in June, followed by submission to the Ministry of Education. Members were asked to consider how they would like to engage in the revision process this year. Donna McEwen will circulate an email by the end of next week to all SEAC members, to gather feedback on the preferred method for this year's plan development.

November 14th PA Day – All Educational Assistants will receive BMS training on the PA Day. This session will involve re-certification for existing EAs and the full, mandatory training course for all new hires.

Association Reports – No reports were submitted.

Next Meeting Date – The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

Livestream Board Meetings

New legislation requires boards to livestream Board meetings for the public. Mark noted that we did this during COVID. Starting with the November Board Meeting we will provide a link on our website for livestreaming. The public will be observers only, with their cameras and chat features turned off. Trustees attending the meeting remotely will use a separate, secure link that allows their cameras and microphones to be activated.

OCSTA Information Items

Bob Schreder brought the trustees' attention to items recently received from OCSTA.

- a. Local Safety Initiatives & Implementation of School Safety Zones Survey
- b. FACE Joint Venture Board Memorandum
- c. Memo – CDSB Local Government Week – October 6/25
- d. Joint Trustee Association Statement on Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras
- e. 2026 Trustee Municipal Election

- f. Recording of Dr. Mark McGowan October 1/25 Speaker Series – this is available on the OCSTA website and is a very worthwhile watch
- g. Apostolic Exhortation DILEXI TE
- h. Ontario Increasing Student Nutrition Investment to \$37.5 Million
- i. Local Government Week 2025 – there were blurbs about our trustees on Facebook last week; Bob thought they were very well done & thanked Kylie, our Communications Officer, for preparing them. He thought it would be nice to also include a mention of local trustees in the school newsletters
- j. Respect for Taxpayers Act

The OCSTA Trustees' Seminar is in January and Bob asked trustees to let Nancy know if they are attending so she can register them for the event.

FUTURE BUSINESS

General/Trustees' Comments

The trustees spoke about the grand opening of St. Thomas the Apostle School and how well organized and enjoyable the event was. Bob Schreder said he was happy to see Laretta Rice there, who was one of four teachers who taught at the school when it was originally built. Connor Sarazin, the artist who did the drawings of the Seven Grandfather Teachings on the front doors of the school was also recognized at the event. The gymnasium was named for Harold Bolger, a long-serving principal at the school and it was so nice to have his family there to share in the recognition of their father.

Bob Schreder said that he attended the PA Day on October 10th at St. Joseph's High School and extended greetings on behalf of the Board. The keynote speaker, Tom D'Amico was great and Dave Noble did a great job organizing the day. There were a number of workshops offered in classrooms by various presenters. James Russett, St. Joseph's High School student trustee, was on a panel discussion about how students are affected by artificial intelligence and James spoke about how he uses AI in his schoolwork.

Mark spoke about a new video that is being created for the Board's secondary enrolment campaign. Taping was done today and he said that Venezia, our Bishop Smith CHS student trustee, was interviewed for it. Venezia said that she enjoyed doing the video and spoke about her overall feeling of what she does at Bishop Smith everyday and what her favourite parts are, how she feels about school, attending Board meetings, etc.

Dave Howard said he was glad to see that the Board's billboard on the highway between Pembroke and Petawawa is still up and said that the location is in a highly visible area. Derek Lennox said the signs and billboards have been left up for another year in various locations. We are trying to be creative with them as radio ads are twice as expensive.

Meeting Dates

- November 10 - Business & Corporate Services Committee Meeting
4:00 p.m. – Board Office
- November 10 - Educational Services Committee Meeting
following BCS Meeting – Board Office
- November 12 - Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Virtual
- November 17 - Inaugural Board Meeting
Mass – 4:00 p.m. – BSCHS Chapel
Meeting – approximately 5:00 p.m. – BSCHS Library
- November 24 - Board Meeting - Committee of the Whole – 4:00 p.m.
- General Meeting – 4:45 p.m.

RESOLUTION #8

Moved by David Howard
Seconded by Pat O’Grady

That the recommendations made by motion and consensus in the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 27, 2025 be approved.

...Carried

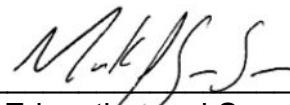
RESOLUTION #9

Moved by Susan Artymko
Seconded by Jeannie Ivory
That the meeting be adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

...Carried



Chairperson, Renfrew County Catholic
District School Board



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