

# Notebook

As a community of believers, we strive to instill a desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence

## Kindergarten Registration

Our registration blitz took place from January 22rd to February 9th, 2024. A variety of new marketing materials were used to promote our publicly funded Catholic Education system. RCCDSB sponsored skating events through the Winter break, had billboards and banners placed throughout Renfrew County, radio advertisements, a new courier van wrap, toques for the kindergarten classes, and more to let families know they can enroll their children in publicly funded Catholic Education.



There is still more to come! Currently, schools across the county are planning open houses to help connect families to our schools and ensure a smooth transition into kindergarten from home or daycare environments. The youngest learners & their families will have the opportunity to ask questions and see first-hand what their new environments would be. We look forward to welcoming our new students!



## 2023-2024 Curriculum Team Highlights Math Action & Achievement Plan

This year, the Math Learning Lead (SPAT) was renamed Math Facilitator to align with the Ministry directives outlined in the new Math Achievement and Action Plan (MAAP). Our work in effective tier 1 practices, including differentiation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and high-quality evidence-based classroom and intervention resources, continues to be a focus at all schools. Four schools were selected by the Ministry for targeted support in these areas.

- Schools were chosen by the Ministry of Education solely on the mathematics achievement levels from the 2021-2022 school year's EQAO results.
- The Ministry provided us with a framework to work from at the board level, school level, and classroom level.
- The Math Facilitator is primarily working for, with, and at the four schools, working directly in grade 3 and grade 6 classrooms, as directed and funded by the ministry.

### Priority Action 1:

Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation and use of instructional and assessment practices with a proven track record of enhancing student achievement.

### Priority Action 2:

Engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching.

### Priority Action 3:

Knowing the mathematics learner, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive.

## Our Mission Statement

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



## French as a Second Language (FSL)

Students have been engaging in various FSL activities over the 2023-24 school year. The team works hard to incorporate French learning into various activities, such as physical literacy, field trips to bakeries and restaurants, and more!

Near the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, students had the chance to incorporate french learning into their physical education class.

RCCDSB is also proud to be offering additional qualification courses in french. This allows qualified teachers or aspiring teachers to become qualified for French instruction, which benefits students across the county.



Our Lady of Lourdes students in Mme. Diab's class with their Remembrance Day Projects



Our Lady of Lourdes students learning french words



FSL Learning with Mr. Solar and Mme. Shoemaker.

## Instilling a desire for life-long learning Following your passions: John Chabot, former NHL Player School Visit

On January 18th and 19th, students at Cathedral, St. Thomas, St. Joseph's High School, & Bishop Smith Catholic High School had the opportunity to listen and learn from former NHL player and John Chabot. Chabot is of Algonquin descent from Kitizan Zibi. He played in Europe for 10 years, coached in the QMJHL, spent 2 years as assistant coach for the New York Islanders, and had a 8-year long NHL career. The hockey teams at both high schools had a chance to run drills with Chabot, and learn from his experience.

The elementary schools listened to Chabot speak about following your passion, aligning with the board theme for 2023-24: *As a community of believers, we strive to instill a desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence.* You could feel the energy of the students in the room as Chabot spoke about his passion for hockey and the ups and downs of his journey to the NHL.

Students were excited to share their passions and what they want to be when they grow up. This opportunity was wonderful for students at both the elementary and secondary level, and the Board would like to thank Gerry Benoit, Indigenous Graduation Coach, for organizing the school visits, and John Chabot, for joining us at Renfrew County Catholic and igniting the pursuit of excellence in students!



John Chabot playing hockey in the Cathedral gym with students



John Chabot playing hockey with the St. Joseph's High School Hockey Team on January 18th, 2024



## Music at RCCDSB

RCCDSB was proud to see students from Holy Name, Lourdes, and St. Michael's be featured in the CBC music challenge for 2023!

Music is an important element of children's education and the board is proud of students and staff for continuing to show their musical talents. Incorporating music into the classroom can be beneficial for creativity, building confidence, and can even be helpful for their social emotional development.



## Secondary Experiential Learning: SHSM Construction Visits

Students from Bishop Smith Catholic High School and St. Joseph's Catholic High School enrolled in one of the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs in construction and manufacturing had the opportunity to visit the new construction of St. Thomas the Apostle, focusing on the the St. Joseph's expansion. The project at St. Thomas the Apostle involves various different trades and students had the opportunity to see first-hand the work they do and how each trade contributes to this project. They were able to ask questions regarding the different elements of the project, and the team was impressed by their insightful questions on the various trades involved.



## Entrepreneurship Event: Hospitality Students Pitch their Business Ideas 'Dragon's Den Style'

Bishop Smith hospitality students showcased their business skills 'Dragons Den Style' at the Entrepreneurship Event on Monday January 15th.

Introducing entrepreneurship to students by encouraging them to brainstorm and create a business model and strategy, it opens up the door to opportunities and inspiration for their future!

At RCCDSB, we have been working toward the Ministry initiative to promote entrepreneurship as a pathway for students, and we currently have 12 teachers involved in various projects at St. Joseph's High School and Bishop Smith.

Students did a fantastic job pitching their businesses and answering questions about marketing plans and investments.



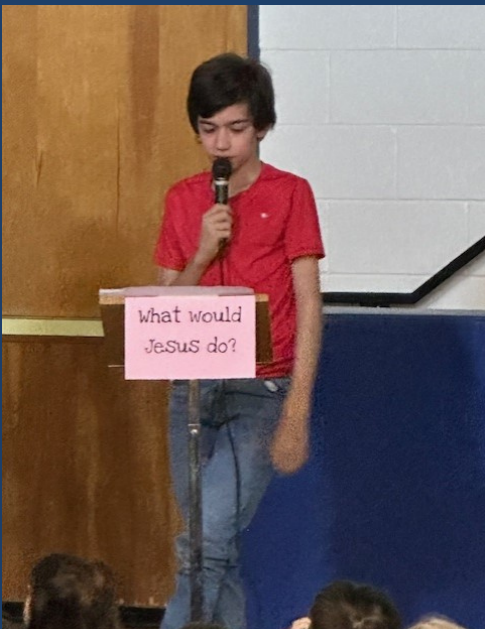


# RCCDSB PINK Week

November 20-24, 2023

November 20-24 RCCDSB celebrated PINK Week for anti-bullying awareness! Every day during PINK week, there was a challenge, reflection and a theme.

Schools across the county also engaged in prayer during class, asking God to shine a little kindness on us and bring happiness and joy to those around us. Kindness Week is important reminder for students to always be kind to one another.



# RCCDSB Commemorates Treaty Recognition Week

During Treaty Recognition Week, Brian Charles, an off-reserve band member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island visited schools across RCCDSB to teach students about treaties. Mr. Charles has worked collaboratively with a small group of knowledge keepers to research and assemble a physical repository of wampum belts connected to Ojibwe history. During his presentations, he used replica wampum belts and illuminated a path that interconnects both the nations and histories of the First Peoples in Eastern Woodland, as well as the settler societies of Canada. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in conversations about treaties and the wampum belts.

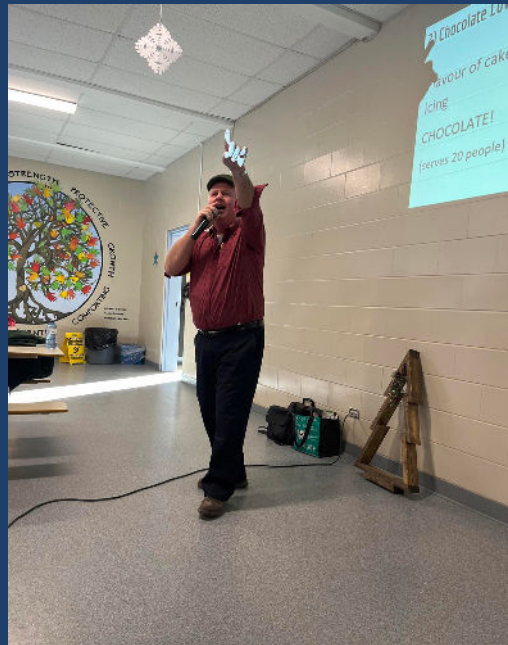




## 2024 Dominican Republic Experience

St. Joseph's High School, Renfrew & Bishop Smith Catholic High School, Pembroke grade 11 & 12 students fundraise all year for their trip to Yamasa, Dominican Republic. Some of the fundraising included a Cake Auction, pizza lunches, and selling maple syrup and handmade candles.

In February of each year, they head to the Dominican Republic to help build and paint homes, deliver medical supplies, clean the Ozama River, visit schools, pour concrete flooring with the Floors for Families Adult Group based in Deep River, and enjoy the people they have grown to call family over the many years.



## Rooted in Faith: Marking the beginning of Lent

At RCCDSB, one of our goals as a school board is to instill a deep desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence.

When Lent arrives, schools across the county gather together for mass and reflection. Students participate in classroom activities that discuss the significance of Lent and why it is such a sacred time in the liturgical year. Many schools will host Pancake Tuesday's for students and staff on Shrove Tuesday, something students always look forward to before the period of fasting begins the next day on Ash Wednesday.

## Alpha Sessions: Building Faith Within Our School Community

In an effort to encourage faith within our school community, the RCCDSB has been hosting Alpha sessions for parents. Alpha is a program for people with little to no prior knowledge of Christianity, individuals who are exploring their faith or have questions about Christianity, those looking to deepen their understanding of their faith and connect with others, or people from various religious backgrounds or no religion at all. The sessions have been successful thus far, and our hope is to continue hosting Alpha for Parents into the 2024-25 school year.



## Message from the Diocese

St. Therese of Lisieux "the Little Flower" was a cloistered Carmelite Nun who died in 1897 at the young age of 24. Most of her life was lived in the quiet confines of a monastery and was not widely known during her earthly life. Yet St. Therese remains one of the most popular Catholic saints of our time. Why? Because the personal sanctity and writings of St Therese captures a fundamental theme: to do ordinary things with extraordinary love.

The pursuit of excellence can be an offering of our lives to God, in service to our neighbour, in the smallest of ways. Excellence should never be confused with that which is grandiose or flashy, but with the ordinary duty of the moment that is before each of us. It is in such ordinary moments that we will see the will of God: to do tasks with a generosity of spirit and to cultivate truth and beauty in all that is asked of us. In doing so we will see the pursuit of excellence as the path to finding God in all moments of work, study and play. What may seem hidden can therefore be an extraordinary offering to the glory of God.

**Rev. George Ryan Holly**  
**Diocesan Administrator of the Pembroke Diocese**

## Message from the Director

As a community of believers, we strive to instill a desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence. This is the goal from Our Vision that the RCCDSB community has been working towards throughout the 2023 -2024 school year. In this edition of the Notebook, we tried to highlight a few examples of this work. Our specialist high skills major pathways help create life-long learners who pursue certifications to demonstrate their excellence in their chosen field. Entrepreneurship has become a focus within our schools. Recently, students engaged in a project where they pitch their own business and answer questions on investments, marketing, and more. These opportunities are important for students, and it is wonderful to see these events happen in our schools.

Moreover, the new curriculum revisions in mathematics, language and technology all align with our pursuit of excellence. Finally, the launch of our Alpha program has been something we look forward to every week, and it is impressive to see parents coming out to learn more about our cherished Catholic faith. We have already accomplished so much as a Catholic Board this year, and we will continue to love unconditionally and educate hearts and minds in the way of Christ.

Peace & Joy,

**Mark Searson**  
**Director of Education**

## Message from the Chair

I always enjoy seeing the highlights of the school year so far. Schools across the county do so much throughout the year, and this hard work deserves to be recognized. This year, as we work to instill a desire for life long learning and pursuit of excellence, I am proud of what we present in this 2024 Winter Notebook.

Opportunities such as touring construction sites with the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) classes to listening to former NHL player, John Chabot, speak about his passion for hockey and never giving up on a dream, is inspiring and is what we strive to be at the RCCDSB, Schools to Believe In.

Knowing that our students are receiving extra support that they may need in mathematics is great news and our educators work so hard to provide the best education possible for these students. The recent launch of the Alpha program is something I am also proud to share with the community as we answer the Pope's call to Evangelization and adult faith formation. I look forward to seeing what the rest of the 2023-24 school year has in store!

**Bob Schreader,**  
**RCCDSB Chair**

## Message from the PIC Chair

This school year has been filled with many amazing experiences for students and staff. As we work to instill a desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence, we have the opportunity to see their passions and interests come to life. The entrepreneurship event that recently took place at Bishop Smith Catholic High School is a wonderful example of this! It is great to see the drive and initiative that students take towards their business ideas, and I have no doubt they will go on to do great things in their post-secondary lives.

We continue to encourage parents to learn more about the Catholic faith and as the PIC Chair, we have been delighted to welcome parents every week to dive deeper and ask the big questions about faith.

I look forward to seeing what's to come for the 2023-24 school year, as we continue to instill a desire for life-long learning!

**Jeannie Ivory**  
**Parent Involvement Committee Chairperson**