

Winter Notebook

Kindergarten Registration 2025-2026

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is holding a Kindergarten Registration Blitz from January 20th to 30th, 2024. This is a great opportunity to register your child for the upcoming school year and learn more about the Kindergarten program. The RCCDSB offers a full-day, play-based learning environment that focuses on early literacy, math, and cultural connections. To register, visit the RCCDSB website and complete the online registration form. You will then need to make an appointment with the school principal to finalize the registration and provide the necessary documentation.



Register with us today!

Community Initiatives

In October, RCCDSB facilitated the delivery of snowsuits donated through CPAN at the Killaloe Knights of Columbus. Thank you to all those who donated and to CPAN for helping children stay warm this winter. We also want to thank our courier, Stephen Carr, not only for delivering the snowsuits but for everything he does for our schools!



Spreading Holiday Cheer

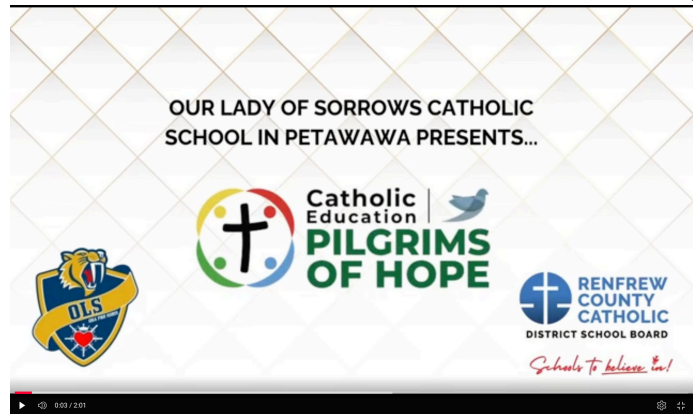
Over the Christmas season, RCCDSB participated in MyFM's Poinsettia Campaign across Renfrew County. This campaign allowed our board to spread some holiday cheer by providing beautiful Poinsettias to various local nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospitals and senior centres.

Additionally, music students at Bishop Smith Catholic High School visited the Carefor McKay Retirement home to perform some Christmas songs for the residents and staff. A wonderful gesture to spread holiday cheer!



Pilgrims of Hope

Every year, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) holds a video contest based on the theme Catholic Education Week. This year, the theme is "Pilgrims of Hope" to go along with the Jubilee Year. Students from Our Lady of Lourdes, George Vanier, and Our Lady of Sorrows participated in the contest with their creative ideas to showcase how they are pilgrims of hope every day. The winners will be chosen in May during Catholic Education Week!



Faith-Formation Among RCCDSB Educators

In December, educators from each school across RCCDSB gathered at St. James the Less Parish for a day of Evangelization and faith-formation. The purpose of the gathering was to discuss evangelization for staff. As a Catholic School Board, we work to integrate faith into everything we do. That is why RCCDSB is introducing Evangelization Leads at each of our Catholic schools. The positions are voluntary, and we are blessed that almost every school had at least one staff member that was interested in taking on this role. We look forward to seeing where this program will lead us together. Evangelization Leads have a special role that is unique at each school. To help them on their faith journeys, the school board has purchased memberships to Hallow, an app that facilitates Catholic learning and teaching from your personal device, anywhere, anytime.

Hallow

Blessed and Beloved Family Life

Grade 1 Curriculum

The family life curriculum undergoes reviews and updates regularly, and in 2024, the curriculum was updated for grade 1 students. Family life education focuses on families as a gift from God and teaches that families are good for the people in the family, including children, and good for the wider community. Students learn that God loves their family and that God is with their family helping and guiding them through life. Additionally, students learn what it means to be created in God's image, and more. The new curriculum emphasizes that children in elementary school are young and need gentle accompaniment in learning about family life. Learning in family life education is gradual, with a particular focus on age-appropriate content.

Indigenous Education: Niigaan Sinclair

RCCDSB staff recently had the privilege of attending a full-day session with Niigaan Sinclair, diving deep into Indigenous education and our commitment to truth and reconciliation.

Niigaan Sinclair is a renowned Anishinaabe writer, editor, and activist known for his powerful commentary on Indigenous issues in Canada. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba, where he holds the Faculty of Arts Professorship in Indigenous Knowledge and Aesthetics, and is currently the Head of the Department of Indigenous Studies. Niigaan is also an award winning editor, writer, and activist, who was recently named to the "Power List" by Maclean's magazine as one of the most influential individuals in Canada.

Sinclair regularly contributes to publications like The Winnipeg Free Press and authoring several books, including the award-winning "Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre." He is a sought-after public speaker and media commentator, recognized for his ability to bridge understanding and advocate for Indigenous rights and reconciliation.

We listened, learned, and reflected on how we can create a more inclusive and supportive space for all students and staff. A big thank you to the RCCDSB Indigenous Education team for making this incredible learning opportunity happen, and to Niigaan for sharing your knowledge with us.



Pictured: Left to Right - Mark Searson, Director of Education; Niigaan Sinclair; Kellie Hisko, Indigenous Education Coordinator; Derek Lennox, Superintendent of Education; Gerry Benoit, Indigenous Graduation Coach, on October 31st, 2024

Treaties Week

During Treaties Recognition Week, members of the Indigenous Education team travelled to schools around Renfrew County to allow students to engage with the Indigenous Peoples' Atlas of Canada, which represents all Treaty territories in Canada.



Dragon's Den Event at Bishop Smith

Teams of students, equipped with meticulously crafted business plans, marketing strategies, and detailed budgets, eagerly presented their innovative ideas to teachers and peers. The students showcased remarkable creativity and business acumen. The event provided a valuable platform for these young minds to develop essential skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and public speaking, while fostering a spirit of innovation and collaboration.



Accessibility and Inclusion at RCCDSB

Abilities Ottawa

RCCDSB Secondary schools had the unique opportunity to learn new skills with Wheelchair Basketball. Abilities Ottawa visited both Bishop Smith and St. Joseph's High School to discuss para sports. This workshop, which focused on accessibility and inclusion, was presented by Emily Glossop, the Executive Director of Abilities Ottawa. Emily has dedicated nearly 20 years to the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre and CHEO working as a Recreation Therapist with children and youth with physical, developmental and associated behavioural needs.

Emily is the recipient of the Order of Ottawa, Paul Harris Fellow Award and the Growing Up Great Award for Stable and Nurturing Relationships. and in 2018, in celebration of International Women's Day, Emily was recognized by CHEO as one of their #SHEOs in celebration of her achievements as a Recreation Therapist and the inspiration she brings to others. Last year, Emily and her husband, Todd Nicholson, were awarded the Mayor's Cup Award which is a lifetime achievement award with the Ottawa Sport Awards.

During this para sports workshop, students had the opportunity to:

- Experience Para Sports: They got hands-on with adaptive equipment and learned about sports like wheelchair basketball.
- Learn about Inclusion: The workshop emphasized the importance of creating a welcoming and accessible environment for everyone.
- Play Wheelchair Basketball with their classmates: Students had a chance to learn all about wheelchair basketball and the rules of the game. They participated in drills and a friendly scrimmage!



Jolan Wong: Accessibility, Equity & Inclusion

Renfrew County Catholic schools in the Pembroke and Petawawa area had the privilege of having Paralympian Jolan Wong teach students about sitting volleyball to encourage accessible, inclusive, and equitable sports.

Jolan Wong is a Paralympic Bronze Medalist for Canada and a pioneer in the sport of sitting volleyball. Jolan lost her leg when she was 13 years old due to osteogenic sarcoma, the same bone cancer Terry Fox had. She has always been a passionate athlete, playing able-bodied sports throughout high school until she realized, 5 years after her amputation, that there was another world of inclusive sports including sitting volleyball. She is currently in her 16th season on the national team, with 3 Paralympics under her belt.

Jolan discovered sitting volleyball at 18 years old when her coach reached out to Volleyball Canada to inquire about adaptive options. Since the sport's inception in Canada, she has proudly represented Team Canada for 16 years. In 2024, the team brought home Canada's first-ever Paralympic medal in the sport of sitting volleyball when they defeated Brazil in the Bronze medal match.

The workshops were a resounding success, with all students engaged and showing skill and sportsmanship. Students had the opportunity to listen to Jolan speak about her experience with sitting volleyball and parasports, then learned some techniques of the sport and got to play a game with their classmates. Each school she visited was filled with enthusiastic staff and students treated to an unforgettable learning experience.





**RENFREW
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CATHOLIC**

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Schools to believe in!