



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Annual Report

Monday, December 7, 2009

Background Information:

Section 283(3) of the Education Act states:

"At the first meeting in December of each year, the chief executive officer of a board shall submit to the board a report in a format approved by the Minister on the action he or she has taken during the preceding 12 months"... "a copy of such report shall be submitted to the Minister on or before the 31st day of January next following."

Current Status:

It is customary that the Board receive the report for submission to the Ministry of Education. On October 20, 2009, a memorandum was received from Kevin Costante, Deputy Minister of Education, identifying the minimum requirements for the Director's Annual Report. While some requirements are identical to last year, some have been amended for enhanced clarity. In addition, a requirement regarding *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* has been added.

1. Enrolment and Demographics

Renfrew County is situated in the North-Eastern Region of Ontario. Geographically, we are bounded by the Ottawa River on the east, Algonquin Park on the west, and our southern-most schools are situated in Arnprior and our northern-most schools are in Deep River. We have seven secondary schools and twenty-four elementary schools. In addition, we have Adult High Schools and Programs for Alternative Learning (PAL) for adolescents in four separate communities.

We are pleased to welcome two new schools to our district - Whitney Public School and Madawaska Public School. Both schools were formerly with the Airy and Sabine and Murchison and Lyell School Authorities and were amalgamated with our district effective September 1, 2009.

RCDSB Enrolment, Effective October 31, 2009		
	Actual Head Count	FTE
Elementary	6,220	5,640.00
Secondary	4,317	4,217.18
Total	10,537	9,857.18

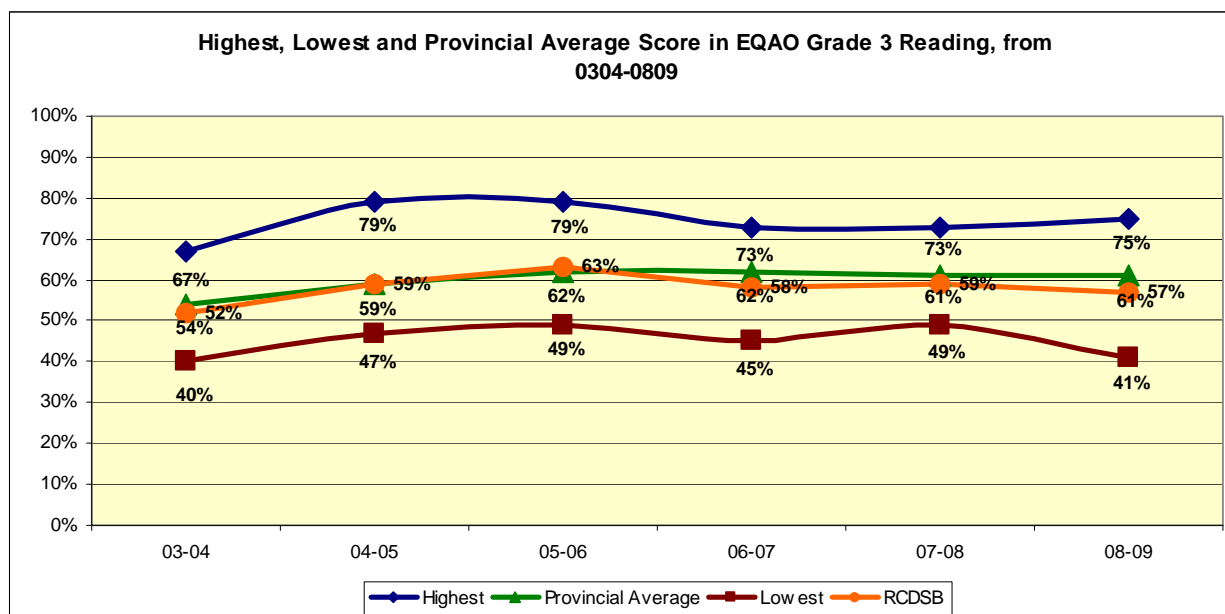
Native Heritage, Self-Identified - Enrolment	
Métis	26
Inuit	5
First Nation	62
First Nation Tuition	67

2. Primary Class Sizes

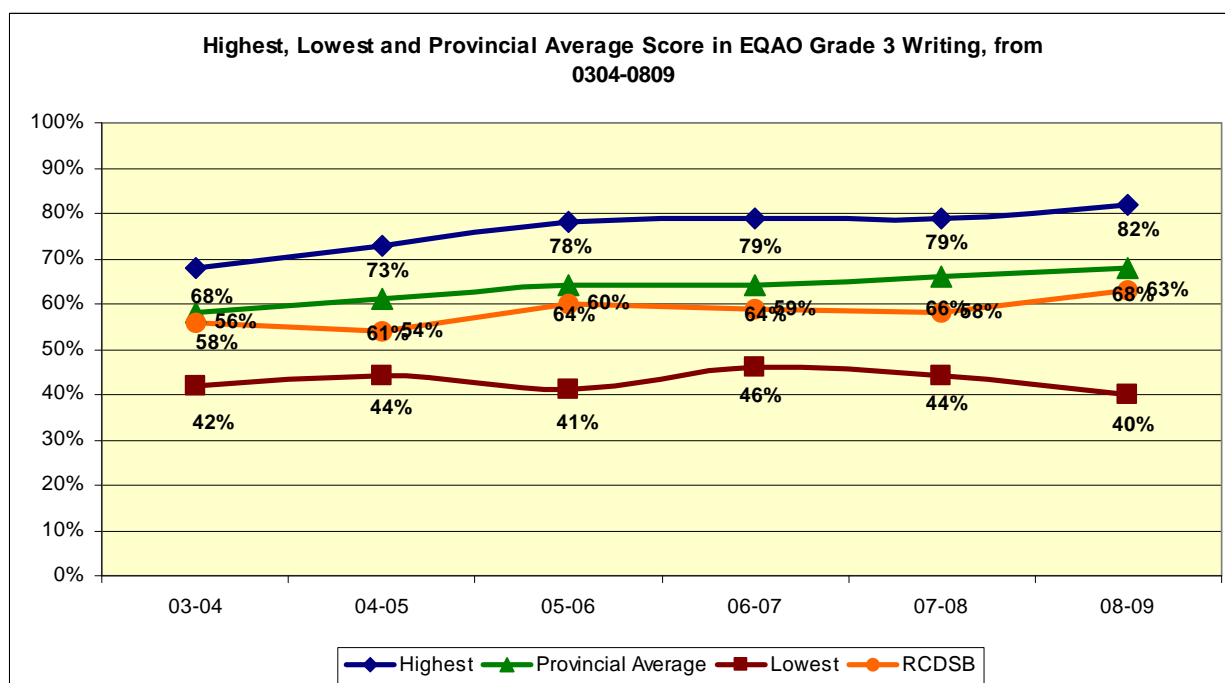
For 2008-2009, 95% of our primary classes contained 20 or fewer students and is compliant with the Ministry class-size regulation for 2009.

3. EQAO Assessment - Provincial Comparison

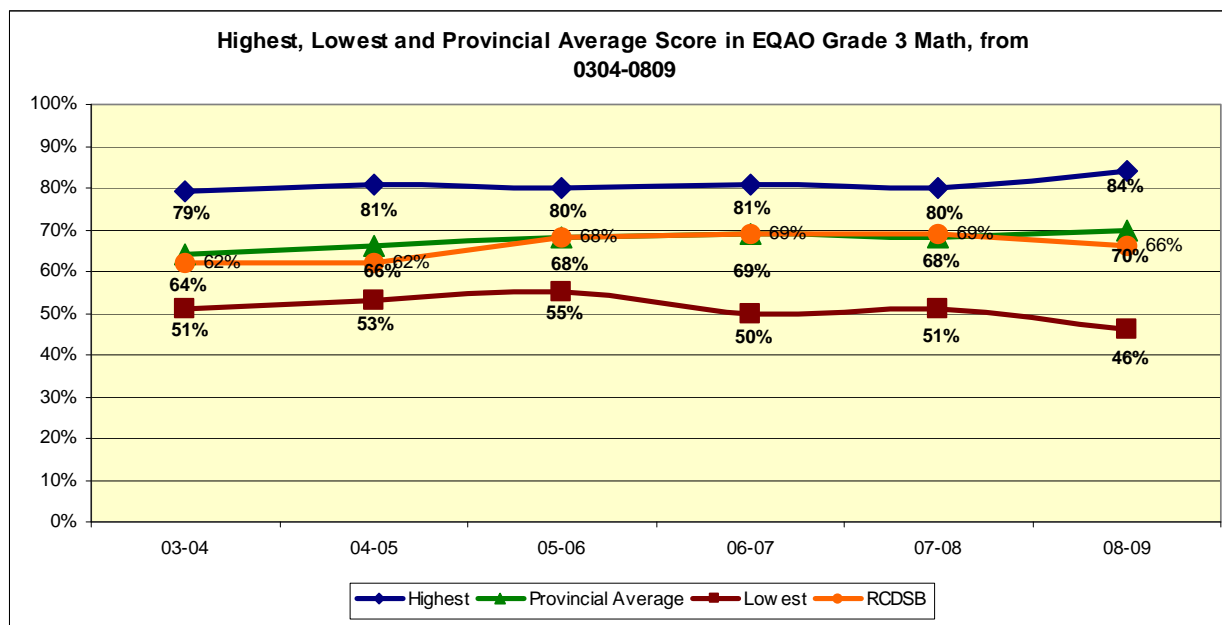
Grade 3 Reading



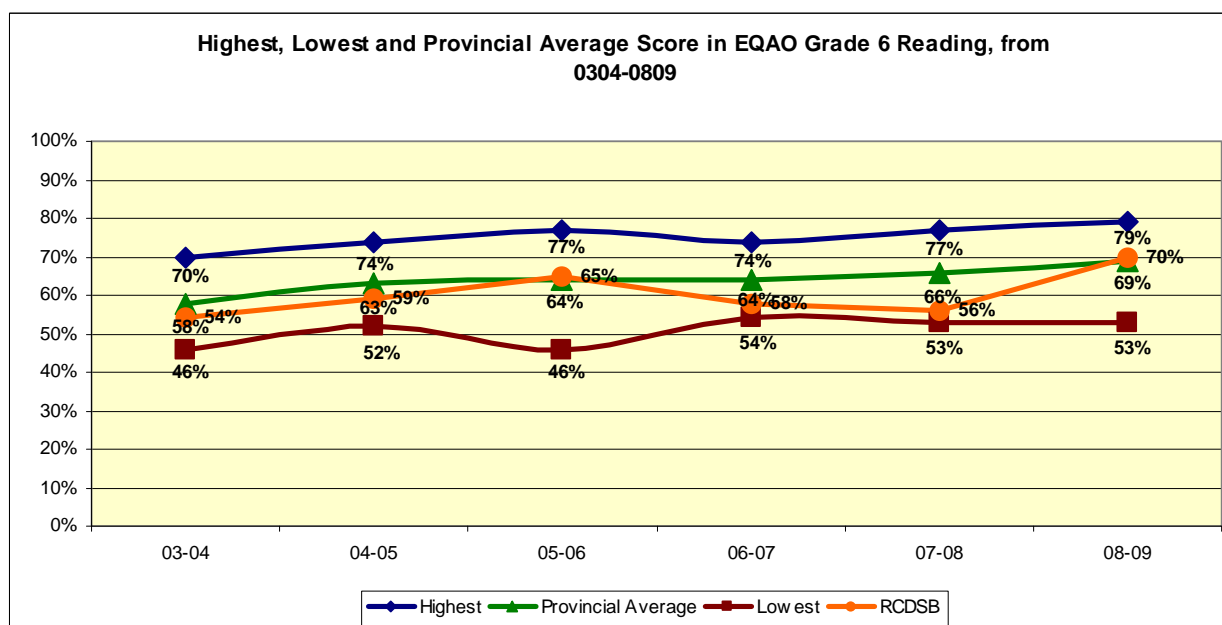
Grade 3 Writing



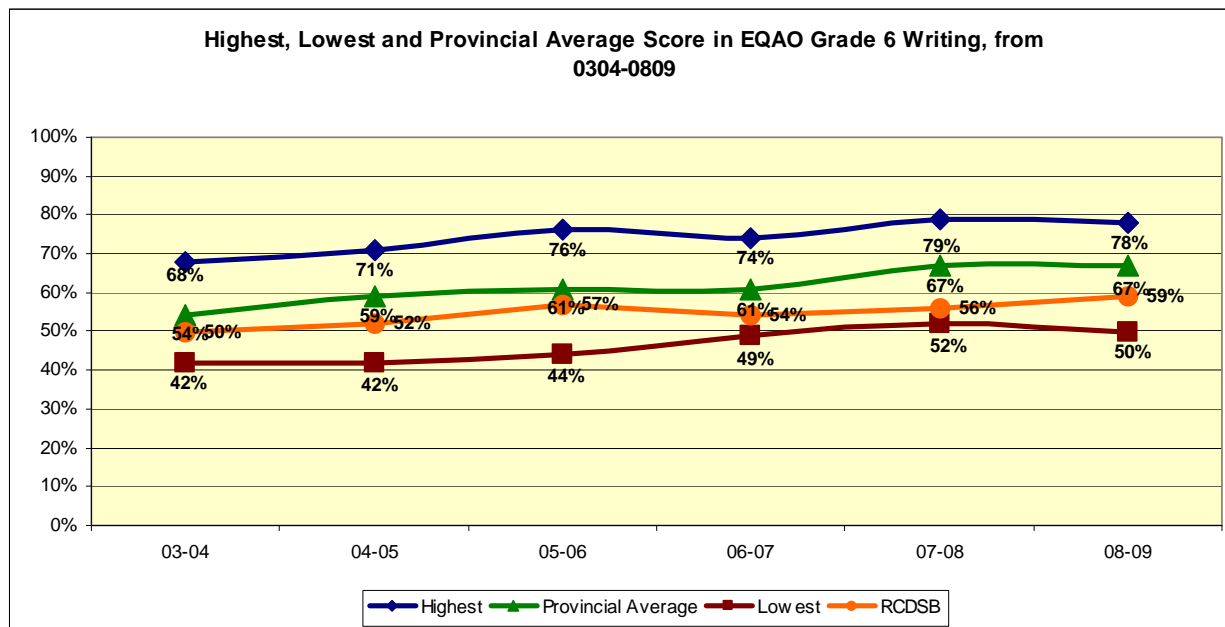
Grade 3 Math



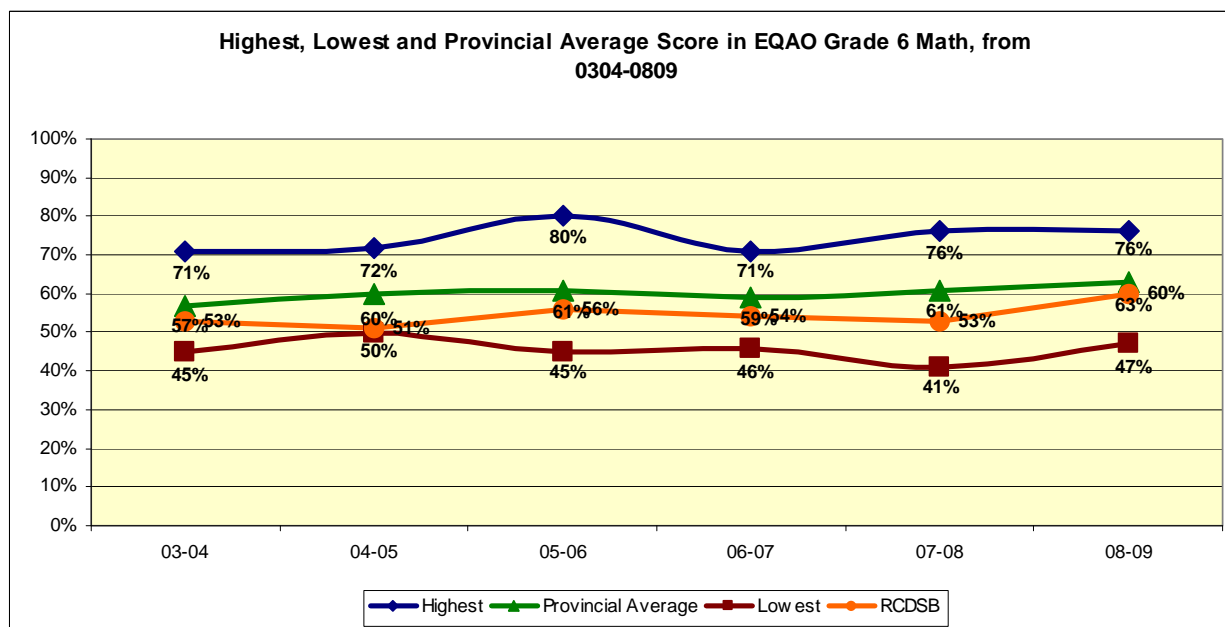
Grade 6 Reading



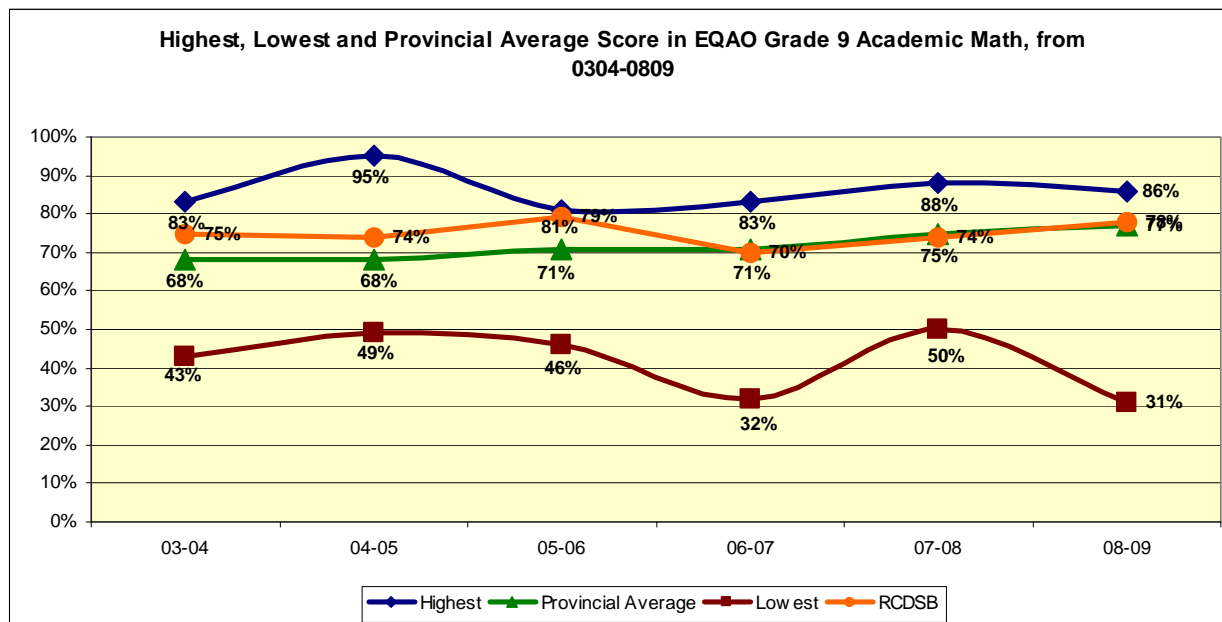
Grade 6 Writing



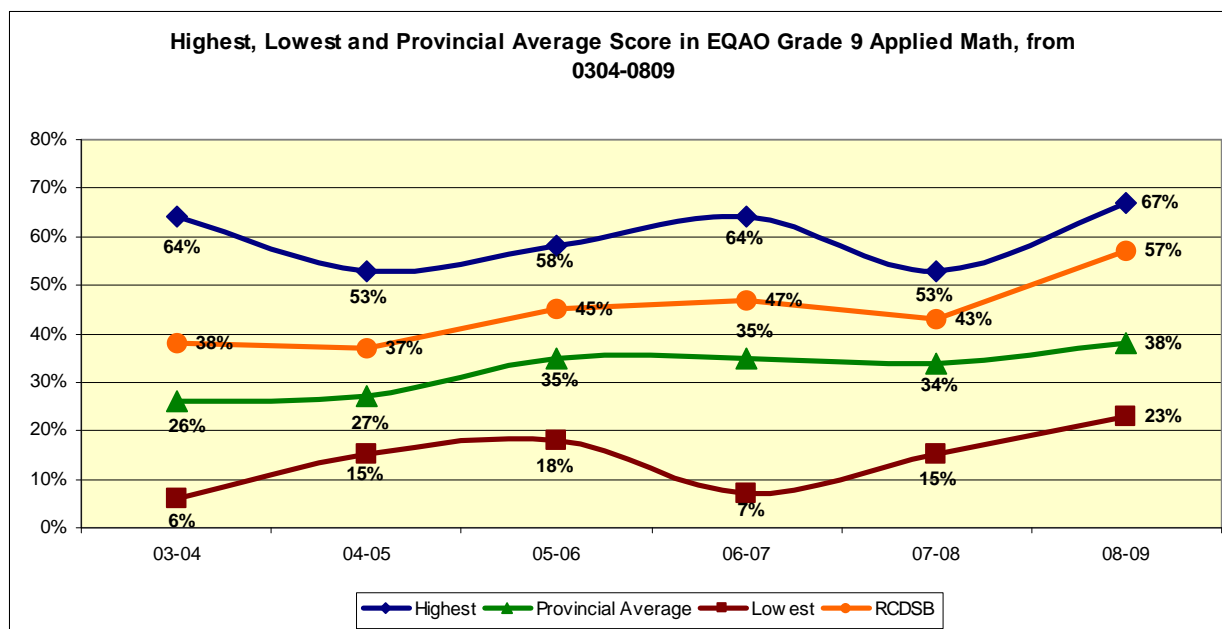
Grade 6 Math



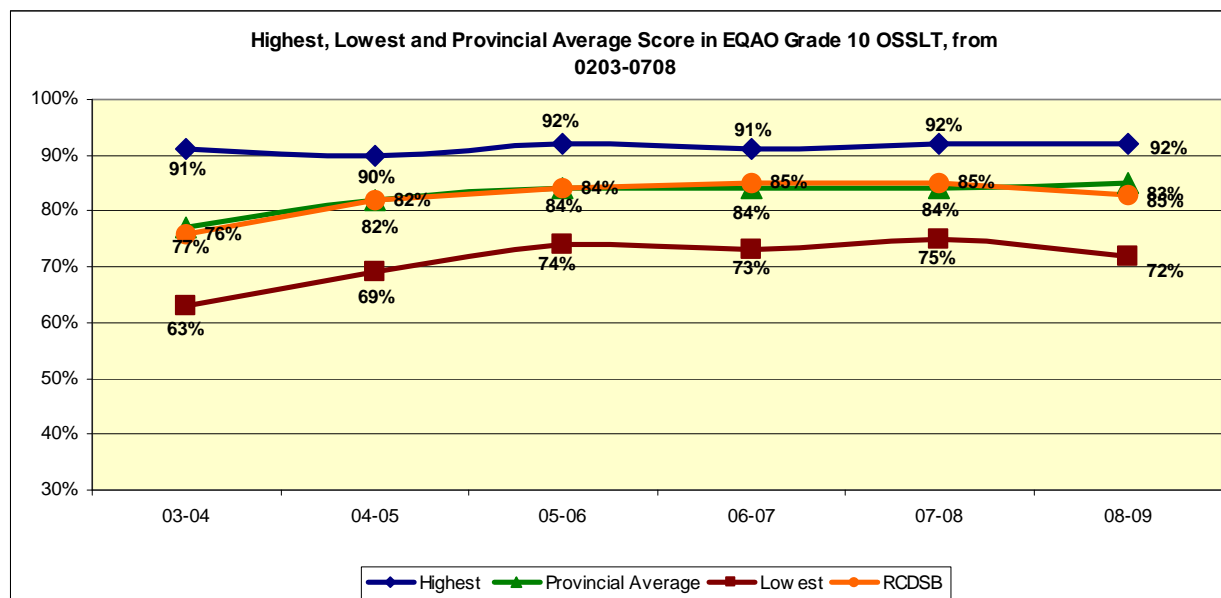
Grade 9 Academic Math



Grade 9 Applied Math



Grade 10 OSSLT



4. EQAO Gender Comparisons and Results for Special Needs Students

RCDSB EQAO Results for Girls and Boys

Grade 3	03-04	'03-04	04-05	'04-05	05-06	'05-06	06-07	'06-07	07-08	07-08	08-09	08-09
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Reading	57%	47%	64%	56%	68%	57%	68%	50%	50%	62%	60%	54%
Writing	64%	48%	63%	47%	72%	48%	68%	50%	50%	48%	71%	56%
Mathematics	62%	61%	62%	61%	70%	66%	73%	65%	65%	70%	71%	62%

Grade 6	03-04	'03-04	04-05	'04-05	05-06	'05-06	06-07	'06-07	07-08	07-08	08-09	08-09
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Reading	63%	44%	62%	55%	76%	56%	62%	53%	66%	47%	77%	62%
Writing	60%	42%	64%	42%	74%	42%	66%	41%	68%	45%	71%	46%
Mathematics	58%	49%	54%	49%	60%	53%	56%	51%	56%	50%	65%	55%

Grade 9 Mathematics	03-04	'03-04	04-05	'04-05	05-06	'05-06	06-07	'06-07	07-08	07-08	08-09	08-09
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Applied	39%	37%	36%	38%	41%	48%	43%	51%	43%	43%	59%	56%
Academic	74%	77%	73%	74%	80%	79%	66%	75%	73%	76%	73%	82%

Grade 10 OSSLT	03-04	'03-04	04-05	'04-05	05-06	'05-06	06-07	'06-07	07-08	07-08	08-09	08-09
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
	82%	70%	86%	77%	90%	79%	87%	80%	89%	80%	86%	81%

RCDSB EQAO Results for Students with Special Needs

Grade 3	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result
Reading	14%	16%	14%	20%	26%	25%
Writing	16%	13%	8%	19%	37%	42%
Mathematics	25%	22%	24%	36%	41%	34%

Grade 6	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result
Reading	18%	18%	26%	21%	21%	31%
Writing	14%	14%	14%	16%	26%	27%
Mathematics	25%	13%	15%	20%	24%	22%

Grade 9 Mathematics	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result	Result
Applied	27%	23%	33%	37%	40%	45%
Academic	55%	45%	68%	61%	57%	68%

5. Student Success

The percentage of Renfrew County District School Board students who achieved 16 or more credits by age 16, as of June 30th of the current calendar year is as follows: 76%. Here are our results in comparison with the province over the past four years.

	June 2006	June 2007	June 2008	June 2009
Province	66%	66%	67%	
RCDSB	73%	76%	78%	76%

6. Focused Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes

Board Improvement Plan with Ambitious Targets

The Board Improvement Team comprised of curriculum consultants, special education consultants, superintendents, student success leader, secondary curriculum leader, MISA leader, student achievement officer, and the director meet regularly to review achievement data and to monitor our progress towards meeting the goals set within our Board Improvement Plan (BIP). Annual targets for reading, writing, mathematics, secondary literacy, secondary numeracy, and secondary pathways are set by the Board Improvement Team by analyzing student achievement data from the EQAO Assessment and from other student data collected across our system. Using Dr. Douglas Reeve's quartile approach, ambitious and attainable targets for the 2009-2010 school year are set based on the previous year's EQAO results.

District Reviews and School Effectiveness Framework

The RCDSB has set a rigorous schedule of district reviews for 21 elementary schools and some secondary schools for the 2009-2010 school year. The district review team is comprised of the director and academic superintendents, and is designed to support school improvement teams in their analysis of school achievement data, self-reflection in utilizing the School Effectiveness Framework, and building capacity for the professional learning of staff.

Aboriginal Education

With more than 5,000 people of Aboriginal ancestry residing in Renfrew County, our Board continues to implement strategies and make progress in realizing the goals outlined in *The Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (FNMI Framework). Some of the special initiatives supported by the Ministry of Education's Aboriginal Education Office include:

The Learning Circle Project - a partnership between Eganville District Public School and Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation that is extended into the Mindiwin Manido Day Care Centre.

Aboriginal Resource Audits - resource audits were conducted in 9 of our schools to determine the presence of current and appropriate Aboriginal resources in our school libraries.

Bringing Aboriginal Culture to the Classroom - this project involved incorporating Aboriginal artifacts and design processes into a manufacturing class with students producing videos to document local Aboriginal business success stories.

Eastern Ontario Regional Symposium on Aboriginal Education - a leadership symposium was created to support the FNMI Framework in Eastern Ontario that attracted over 200 educators from the Eastern Ontario Region.

Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee - an advisory committee comprised of educators, community representatives, a post-secondary representative, and a student was established to provide advice on how we can promote a greater awareness and understanding about Aboriginal peoples, culture and world views within our schools.

Community Outreach Project - an extension of the previous year's funding for our two newly acquired schools in Whitney and Madawaska to develop classroom learning and support materials around Aboriginal Peoples and cultural practices.

Consultation on the Voluntary Self-Identification of Aboriginal Students - consultation sessions with community stakeholders and school councils were held to assist in the development of an administrative procedure to guide our Board's implementation of the self-identification process for Aboriginal students in our schools. The procedure is in place to guide and direct our efforts as of January 1, 2010.

Special Education Programming

A Board-wide commitment to an emphasis on inclusive education was pursued in 2009 through various initiatives designed to support students with special needs to access the curriculum and to increase achievement outcomes. Some of these initiatives included:

CODE Project - professional learning sessions were enabled by funding provided through the Council of Directors of Education (CODE) and the Ministry of Education. These sessions focused on instructional practices linked to the personalization of instruction, how to respond to learner variance within the regular classroom setting, and the use of student assessment data to inform greater precision in designing interventions to support student learning.

Design and Implementation of Individual Education Plans - staff training targeted for students with autism and students who participated in Alternative Learning Programs.

Mixed Abilities Classes - the implementation and review of our service model that guides our approach to the intervention and support of students with social/emotional learning needs.

Student Support Leadership Initiative - collaborative partnerships with community agencies to develop and enhance local partnerships that will better meet the needs of students through collaborative planning, coordination and referrals to address children/youth mental health needs.

The culminating result of these efforts was an increase in student achievement for students with special education needs, in most program areas, measured by the provincial assessments that were administered during the school year.

Schools in the Middle

Funding from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has enabled our Board to support Professional Learning/Leadership Networks through an initiative termed “Schools in the Middle” or the *Effective Leadership, Effective Schools* strategy. Several of our schools are identified as sites within our Board and who are critical to developing the aforementioned networks. These schools were recognized by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat as sites where 50% to 74% of the students achieved the Provincial Standard on four of six (or two of three) 2009 EQAO assessments. We are welcoming the leadership and participation of the following schools: Walter Zadow Public School, Central Public School, Rockwood Public School, Champlain Discovery Public School, General Lake Public School, Sherwood Public School, Herman Street Public School, and Pine View Public School.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

RCDSB has experienced a high degree of success in assisting students prepare for the future through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. With the leadership of Mr. Terry Hoelke, we have increased the number of co-operative education students in apprenticeship-related placements and increased the number of students registered as apprentices with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Character Development

The RCDSB recognizes the importance in explicit character education programs to promote and foster safe, caring and respectful learning environments. Our Character Development Committee, consisting of staff and trustees promotes and supports our work in this area. Initiatives such as school climate surveys, Character Education Champions Day, and school based social skills training programs are just some of the ways that our character virtues are being conveyed and practiced across our system.

Specialist High Skills Majors

RCDSB continues to expand to its Specialist High Skills Majors programs. The RCDSB received \$456,000 from the Ministry to add the following sectors to our schools: Justice, Community Safety and Emergency Services, and Construction. These new SHSMs were added to our existing sectors of Business, Transportation, Forestry, Manufacturing, Health and Wellness, Arts and Culture, Environment, and Hospitality and Tourism. The RCDSB now has 24 Specialist High Skills Majors available to students, giving us the highest number per capita in the province.

Differentiated Instruction

Responding to current brain research and the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson, teaching staff and administration have received job-embedded professional development on the use of differentiated instruction, not as a strategy, but as a “*way of thinking about teaching and learning*” (Tomlinson). Differentiated instruction is effective instruction that is responsive to students’ readiness, interests and learning preferences. In recognition of the fact that each child has his or her own unique patterns of learning and in our belief that all children can succeed, teachers use student and class profiles to guide instruction and ensure that the curriculum is accessible by all.

7. Notable Accomplishments in Student, Parent, and Community Engagement

- In June 2009, an amazing 53 RCDSB secondary students won the Province's Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarships. The Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship Program is a program of the Ontario Government that rewards students who graduate with top marks at their high school, and who plan to continue their studies at an Ontario college or university. Students who maintain an 80% average at the post-secondary level can receive these scholarships, which are worth up to a maximum of \$3,500 per year, for up to four years in total.
- Renfrew County public schools have achieved a remarkable accomplishment by participating with over 3,700 Ontario schools in the Terry Fox Foundation's National School Run Day, raising an incredible \$6.6 million for cancer research. Twenty-two of our schools participated in 2008 and raised \$29,627.67.
- This past year the Ministry of Education launched a new Student Voice program that encourages students to SpeakUp and become more engaged in their education. Students are encouraged to participate in local projects, the Minister's advisory council and regional forums. In the first year of operation, students submitted over 1,300 applications to the Ministry. Six of our seven secondary schools received \$11,015 for a total of 14 different projects.
- Grade 9 students were received differently this school year as a result of the Board's commitment to improving our transition programs. With over 1000 Grade 9 students entering high school for the first time, the Board recognized the need to implement a program that would alleviate the stress and anxiety of entering a new school. Link Crew is a high school transition program that uses student leaders to welcome students new to secondary school and make them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their high school experience. Pilot projects at General Panet, Opeongo, and Arnprior District High Schools showed improvements in attendance, student engagement, academic performance and a reduction in discipline referrals to the office. At the August 2009 Orientation Day at Arnprior District High School, 199 of 202 Grade 9 students were in attendance.
- In September 2009, student leaders from all seven secondary schools participated in a Student Leadership Retreat at Wilderness Tours in Foresters Falls. Student leaders were selected to represent the various groups within their schools. During the day, students had the opportunity to team build within their own school groups as well as to learn from students in similar leadership positions in other RCDSB schools. Several guests presented carousels where students could gather information about community organizations, environmental links, and Ministry funded projects such as SpeakUp grants. Our student trustee, Steven Hawthorne and area trustee, David Shields attended the session on behalf of the Board.
- Cheryl Budarick, a parent from Palmer Rapids Public School has been appointed to one of only four executive director positions with the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. This is in recognition of the tremendous work she has done to involve parents in raising funds to improve the school playground for the benefit of the entire community.

- The Parent Involvement Committee developed a networking strategy called an “Assembly of School Councils” and met twice in 2009 to discuss items including: Board Improvement Plans/School Improvement Plans, how school councils can actively build a focus around student learning, and the development and revision to principal profiles that are used as part of the Board’s process for selecting and assigning principals to an administrative role in one of our 31 schools. These networking sessions were highly successful, with more than 80% of the school councils participating. This participation rate is particularly impressive considering the rural and remote geography that defines our County. Despite these potential barriers posed by time and terrain, it is clear that our school councils value the networking efforts facilitated by our Parent Involvement Committee.
- On Saturday, September 26th, 2009 at Opeongo High School, the RCDSB’s Parent Involvement Committee held its 3rd Annual ‘Achieving as One’ Symposium. The keynote speaker was the popular Barbara Coloroso who spoke about “Parenting with Wit and Wisdom”. In addition to the keynote speaker, participants were able to select from a variety of workshops that supported improving parental engagement with their schools, improving the efficiency of school councils, and building communication pathways with school councils and the school board. The work of our PIC is recognized in the draft document recently released by the Ministry of Education, “Parents in Partnership - A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools”.
- On Thursday, October 8th, the third and final consultation session was held in the community of Deep River. Students, staff, parents, municipality representatives, community users, and the general public gave valuable input into how the Renfrew County District School Board should spend the \$4.8 million Energy Efficiency Funding that was announced by the Ministry of Education in June 2009. The chairs of the Morison, Keys, and Mackenzie school councils were instrumental in transmitting information and asking questions throughout the consultation process.
- On September 1, 2009, the Renfrew County District School Board expanded by two schools, welcoming Madawaska and Whitney Public Schools to our district. Over the summer months, administrative staff from both school authorities and the RCDSB worked diligently to ensure a smooth transition.

8. Achieving 75% by 2011

Investment in Technology

- The RCDSB recognizes that an investment in technology allows teachers and students to participate more fully in the emerging world of digital learning and reduces the gap between how students learn outside of school versus in the classroom. Trustees approved an expenditure of \$175,000 to purchase and install SMARTBoards in our system and provide training for staff. This resulted in the purchase of 35 SMARTBoards for our schools, guaranteeing every school in our district has access to this exciting technology. By December 2009, students will have access to 97 SMARTBoards in our schools.
- The RCDSB identified that current technologies are stretching our current Wide Area Network (WAN) beyond its capacity. This limits, and in some cases, eliminates the possible use of technologies that are beneficial in providing an enriching learning environment for our students. In April 2009, the Board gave direction to staff to proceed with an RFP for the provision of a new WAN, providing minimum speeds of 100Mbps with a preference for 1Gbps and a completion date of Fall 2011.

Investment in Early Learning

The RCDSB will be implementing full-day learning for four and five-year-olds in selected schools beginning September 2010. Ministry funding has enabled us to provide 156 Early Learning pupil spaces for the 2010-2011 school year and an additional 78 spaces for the 2011-2012 school year. The Early Learning Program will provide a smoother transition to Grade 1, and help children develop the social and academic skills necessary to succeed in school and in life.

Strategic Plan

In the Spring of 2009, our trustees initiated a strategic planning session facilitated by our senior administrative team. The Board reflected on its values, accomplishments, mission, and vision for the future. As a result, a new strategic plan is in the process of being developed that will set the course for excellence in teaching and learning, safe, caring and respectful learning environments, and wise use of resources.

Restructuring Supports for Special Needs Students

Despite our reality of declining enrolment, we have 2,654 students (or 25% of our student population) identified as exceptional learners who are using special education support to access the curriculum. With 25% of our student population receiving support, and in light of the ongoing shortfalls in funding within our special education budget line over the past decade, there continues a need for thoughtful deployment of expertise and resources within our schools. The RCDSB is currently implementing the Response to Intervention Model (RTI), which is a tiered approach to supporting students identified with special learning needs.

Precision, Professional Learning, and Personalization

Principals work collaboratively through their local monthly forums to improve their instructional leadership. Elementary principals participate in regular Leadership Learning Teams with training provided through the Leading Student Achievement initiative. This is a joint project between the Ontario Principals' Council, the Board and the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. As a result of this support, many principals, with the assistance of their respective School Improvement Teams are implementing Teaching and Learning Critical Pathways in their schools.

Aboriginal Education

RCDSB has been a leader in offering Native Studies courses in our secondary schools. Last year, 18 sections were offered across our schools and this year we are offering 23 sections, the highest proportion of courses per capita in the province. Training and networking opportunities have been provided to our teachers.

Summer Booster Program

Principal Brent McIntyre and his staff of educators from the Summer Booster Program have been asked to present the results of their work at the Ontario Education Research Symposium in February 2010. The Summer Booster Program is designed to support Grades 1 and 2 students who have gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills. Student data was collected and then analysed to determine ways in which we can reduce the impact of the 'summer slide' in learning. As a result of their inquiry, precise strategies have been developed and are proving effective in helping struggling students retain new knowledge and skills over the summer.

Mathematics Facilitator

With the support of funding from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, RCDSB was able to hire a Numeracy Facilitator to develop local capacity in mathematics teaching and learning. This 2009-2010 position, which is open to elementary teachers with expertise in mathematics, is focused on improving student achievement in Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6, with an emphasis on Grades 3 and 6. Morison Public School teacher, Shelagh McCarthy, was the successful candidate and received Ministry training to facilitate the use of evidence-based strategies in mathematics and is sharing her knowledge by visiting schools and building capacity with our teachers across our system.

Early Literacy Program

Since 2003, the RCDSB has recognized the importance of supporting early literacy in the primary division program. The Board has provided early literacy teachers at each of its elementary school sites to provide support to students who were encountering difficulties in reading. In 2009, the Board engaged in a pilot project within 10 schools, which will emphasize a coaching model to support student achievement in early literacy. By focusing on students in the Kindergarten and Grade 1 program, this model will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness in supporting and building capacity among classroom teachers in the area of balanced literacy instruction.

Continuing and Community Education

Our Continuing and Community Education Department continues to open doors for students and provides programming for students who don't normally find success in our regular school programs. The Program for Alternative Learning, the Young Parent Support Program and the English as a Second Language Support Program are examples of successful programs that meet the needs of alternative learners.

9. Successful Programming that Meets the Needs of Students

The following programs have been implemented to serve students unable to attend regular school programs as a result of inappropriate behaviour, long-term suspensions or expulsion:

- Three teachers and 2.57 child and youth workers worked with 32 elementary students who were assigned to MAC classes in their geographical areas. This program resulted in these students continuing their education rather than being on long-term suspension or expulsion.
- Through a partnership with the Phoenix Centre, the Board continued to offer individual counselling and four behaviour programs for students in the following areas: addictions, anger management, non-bullying and non-compliance.
- Three secondary students were expelled and all participated in the behaviour programs and individualized academic programs offered by the Board. These students worked with the Board's designated half-time teacher for suspended and expelled students. One of the students, who was identified as having special needs, also received assistance from a home-instruction teacher as part of his academic program. All three expelled students earned credits and are now integrated back into the schools.

10. Progress on Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

RCDSB is committed to equitable educational outcomes for all students. The Board has numerous administrative procedures that ensure the principles of Equity and Inclusion are embedded in its day-to-day operations. In particular, our 2008 procedures/policies relating to Human Rights, Workplace Harassment and Workplace Conflict, and Bullying and Harassment provide for prevention and intervention strategies as well as reporting mechanisms to deal with all forms of discrimination in a timely manner. These practices and procedures support our key outcome of providing a safe, caring and respectful learning environment.

To ensure the full compliance and alignment with the requirements of the new PPM 119 (*Developing and Implementing Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools 2009*), the Board's Character Development Committee is currently overseeing the development of a new comprehensive Equity and Inclusive Education Procedure and a set of Guidelines for Religious Accommodation that will complement current procedures. Drafts of both documents are currently out to our many stakeholder groups as well as community groups for feedback and input. The Board is on target to have these two items in place prior to the September 2010 deadline. In addition, revisions to our administrative procedures for bullying and progressive discipline are well underway and these revised procedures also reflect the principles of equity and inclusion. Approximately 20 other Board procedures have been identified for vetting through the lens of equity and inclusion as we work through the actions and timelines outlined in *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*.

The Board is actively involved in several other initiatives that support equity and inclusion, including revisions to our Student Assessment and Evaluation Guideline. Schools are updating resources and lists of community support agencies to provide additional supports to students experiencing gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment and other inappropriate sexual behaviour. School teams have recently been trained on human rights, racism, discrimination, religious accommodation and other items related to equity and inclusion. A process is in place to ensure all school staff will receive similar training by February 1, 2010. Through our Accessibility Plan and our School Climate Surveys, staff and students identify discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students and parents and take steps to remove these barriers. These initiatives support the Board's commitment to fairness, equity, and inclusiveness in its policies, programs and operations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Renfrew County District School Board receives the Director's Annual Report 2009.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Clarke
Director of Education