

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE FOR:  
RENFREW COUNTY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
and the  
RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**BACKGROUNDER – STAGGERED BELLS PROPOSAL**

The Ministry of Education has embarked on an initiative to perform Operational Reviews on the 72 district school boards across the Province. One of the specific purposes of such a review is to provide support and assistance to ensure that school boards are financially healthy, well managed, and positioned to direct optimum levels of resources to support the priority of student success. One of the areas for review is transportation and the Ministry of Education is coming to Renfrew County this fall to assess the \$10 million dollar operation of the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC) operated jointly by the Renfrew County District School Board and the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board. The Ministry of Education is strongly encouraging and expecting Consortiums to implement a staggered bell delivery model.

The concept of staggered bells is not new in Ontario and many boards have already implemented this system. The Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium has been considering the concept of staggered bells. Staggered bell models necessitate the school day to begin at different intervals usually between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Conversely the day would end between the hours of 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. This would require fewer buses for transporting students. The Consortium has shared this information with school councils, parents, staff and bus operators and is collecting feedback from these focus groups as to how each model would impact them. At the respective Board meetings at the end of March, a recommendation will be brought forward on a specific staggered bell scenario and we will be seeking input from the public on how an earlier or later start to the school day will impact students and families.

The six meetings scheduled are as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting to be Held At</b>	<b>Time</b>
ARNPRIOR	Tuesday, March 31, 2009	Arnprior District High School	7:00 p.m.
RENFREW	Wednesday, April 1, 2009	St. Joseph's Catholic High School	7:30 p.m.
MADAWASKA	Thursday, April 2, 2009	Madawaska Valley District High School	7:00 p.m.
PEMBROKE	Wednesday, April 15, 2009	Bishop Smith Catholic High School	7:00 p.m.
DEEP RIVER/PETAWAWA	Thursday, April 16, 2009	General Panet High School	7:00 p.m.
OPEONGO	Monday, April 20, 2009	Opeongo High School	7:00 p.m.

Each of the information sessions will provide the same information in order to allow the public the opportunity to attend whichever information session meets their needs. Following public input, both Boards of Education will vote on the implementation of staggered bells at their respective April board meetings. If the Boards vote in favour of implementation, the new staggered bells model could begin as early as September 2009.

Further information of the above release can be obtained by contacting Stephanie Giesebrecht at Renfrew County District School Board (613 735-0151) or Mary Lynn Schauer at Renfrew County Catholic District School Board (613 735-1031).