

# IN FOCUS

## WITH GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION



September/October 2021

### GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION 2021-22 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Aspirational Statements & Goals specified in the Good Spirit School Division 2021-22 Strategic Plan are organized within the four pillars of Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH) and are in alignment with the Provincial Education Plan. CSCH is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way.

For the Board to work towards these aspirational statements and commitments, the budget provides funding to carry out these necessary activities. The budget includes estimates for Revenue and Expenditures to support school division work in the following areas:

- High Quality Teaching and Learning;
- Engagement of All Students, Families and Communities;
- Effective Policy and Procedures; and,
- Healthy, Sustainable Physical and Social Environments.

To view GSSD's parent and public friendly plan, please visit [gssd.ca](https://gssd.ca) > [Media Room](#) > under Reports, select 2021-2022 > [2021-22 Strategic Plan - Parent and Public Version](#).

For more information on GSSD's strategic plan, visit [gssd.ca](https://gssd.ca) > [Division](#) > [Strategic Plan](#).

GSSD is proud of the accomplishments made by staff and students and look forward to showcasing a variety of the successes throughout the year!

## GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW 2021-2022

Motto	Mission	Vision	Values	Aspirational Statements
Students Come First	Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures	Learning Without Limits ... Achievement For All	Belonging, Respect, Responsibility, Learning, Nurturing, Perseverance and Diversity	High Quality Teaching and Learning Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities Effective Policy and Procedures Healthy, Sustainable Physical and Social Environments

### Strategic Focus and Long-Term Goals

<h4 style="text-align: center;">High Quality Teaching and Learning</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2022:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 27% more students will exit Kindergarten at appropriate development (green) than when entering Kindergarten.</li> <li>◦ 90% of Grade 1 to 6 students will show one-years growth in their reading levels.</li> <li>◦ there will be 2% more students writing at or above grade level in Grades 4, 7, &amp; 9 compared to the June 2019 data.</li> <li>◦ there will be 2% more Grades 2, 5, &amp; 8 students at or above grade level in math compared to the June 2019 data.</li> <li>◦ the number of students in Grades 4 to 12 reporting high levels of anxiety will reduce by 2% from spring 2021 data.</li> <li>◦ the three-year graduation rate will increase by 2% from the June 2021 data.</li> <li>◦ the five-year graduation rate will increase by 2% from the June 2021 data.</li> <li>◦ students in Grades 4 to 12 will report a 2% increase in student intellectual engagement from spring 2021 data.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will demonstrate a commitment to provide professional development and training to its staff based on the four Aspirational Statements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <h4 style="text-align: center;">Effective Policy and Procedures</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2022:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ GSSD will reduce barriers and enhance student success in each functional area by demonstrating improvement in services through the development, review, and revision of:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ administrative procedures; and,</li> <li>▪ processes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ GSSD will implement systemic and transparent approaches to find efficiencies and increase value for money allowing the Division to respond to the challenges of student and staff needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2022:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ all students will achieve a 2% increase in student attendance based on the June 2021 data.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will increase our organization's cultural competencies through division-wide processes and professional learning that grow our collective understanding about Indigenous identity, histories, worldview, and systemic barriers.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will demonstrate a commitment to the establishment of new and reaffirmed partnerships.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will actualize an Early Years Engagement Network to enhance educational opportunities for early years students.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will establish a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Council to enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <h4 style="text-align: center;">Healthy, Sustainable Physical &amp; Social Environments</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2022:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ students will report feeling welcomed, included and feel a sense of belonging and caring at school.</li> <li>◦ staff will report feeling welcomed, included and feel a sense of belonging and caring at work.</li> <li>◦ students will develop mental fitness (state of well-being and having a positive sense of how we feel, think, and act) to identify emotions and access supports.</li> <li>◦ staff will develop mental fitness (state of well-being and having a positive sense of how we feel, think, and act) to identify emotions and access supports.</li> <li>◦ students will receive timely and responsive evidence-based prevention and intervention services at school.</li> <li>◦ students and families will report that they know where to turn for more intensive support when needed.</li> <li>◦ GSSD will enhance the physical facilities occupied by students and staff to ensure health and well-being.</li> <li>◦ all high schools will have established alliances for gender and sexual diversity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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#### Baselines

The number of Administrative Procedures & Forms reviewed or updated in 2020-21 was 25.	GSSD received \$3,551,464 from the Ministry of Education during the 2020-21 school year to support COVID-19 expenditures. \$1,006,063 will be carried over to fund additional supports during 2021-2022.	Early Years Evaluation Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 Comparative Results	Physical Development—Fine Motor: 21% increase
In June 2021, 70% of students in Grades 1 to 6 were at or above grade level in reading.	During the 2020-2021 school year, GSSD provided over 21 professional development opportunities to staff	Awareness of Self and Environment: 10% increase Cognitive Skills: 28% increase Social Skills and Approaches to Learning: 10% increase Language and Communication: 9% increase	Physical Development—Gross Motor: 12% increase

# Welcome Back!



## HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

### Long-term Goals

- By June 30, 2022, 27% more students will exit Kindergarten at appropriate development (green) than when entering Kindergarten
- By June 30, 2022, 90% of Grade 1 to 6 students will show one-years growth in their reading levels.
- By June 30, 2022, there will be 2% more students writing at or above grade level in Grades 4, 7, & 9 compared to the June 2019 data.
- By June 30, 2022, there will be 2% more Grades 2, 5, & 8 students at or above grade level in math compared to the June 2019 data.
- By June 30, 2022, the number of students in Grades 4 to 12 reporting high levels of anxiety will reduce by 2% from spring 2021 data.
- By June 30, 2022, the three and five-year graduation rate will increase by 2% from the June 2021 data.
- By June 30, 2022, students in Grades 4 to 12 will report a 2% increase in student intellectual engagement from spring 2021 data.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will demonstrate a commitment to provide professional development and training to its staff based on the four Aspirational Statements.

### GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Professional Development (PD) is an important part of high quality teaching and learning. As GSSD works towards the June 30, 2022 long term goal of committing to providing professional development and training days to staff, we have held over 16 PD opportunities so far.

GSSD has nine designated non-student PD days in the 2021-22 school year calendar.

PD Event	Date	Topic /Topic / Outcome
MySchoolSask and Edbsy Training	August 23, 2021	Administrative Assistants new to GSSD learned the basics of the two systems we utilize the most in the division; MySchoolSask a provincial student information system, and Edbsy, which is a social learning platform for students and families.
New Teacher Orientation	August 24, 2021	Teachers new to GSSD spent the day understanding what Good Spirit School Division is all about. The goal of the orientation was to promote and develop teacher confidence to ensure a successful start to the year and profession at GSSD.
MySchoolSask and Edsby Refresher	August 24, 2021	Administrative Assistants met virtually for a refresher on MySchoolSask and Edbsy.
15 Passenger Van Training	August 25, 2021	The training offered by the Saskatchewan Safety Council, allowed approved staff to drive 15 passenger vans to transport students to and from extra-curricular activities. Upon completion of the class/in vehicle training, participants were certified for five years.
Heggerty Training	August 26, 2021	The purpose of this session was to train Student Support Teachers and Interventionists to use the Heggerty phonemic awareness intervention program.
SchoolCash Register and Group Collection Training	August 26, 2021	Administrators and Admin Assistants were invited to join in on a SchoolCash training session. School Cash is the software program at the division and school level.
Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH)	August 26, 2021	Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH) is an international framework for understanding and planning for student well-being and success. August 26th provided participants the opportunity to learn about what CSCH is, about why it is important, about how it can be used to address barriers and opportunities, and most importantly how CSCH will be foundational to GSSD strategic planning and our coordinated efforts moving forward.

PD Event	Date	Topic /Topic / Outcome
Inspirational Speaker Matt Day	August 30, 2021	Matt Day is a professional musician, speaker, musical humorist and music-care professional. He virtually joined all staff from GSSD to deliver an exceptional, unique and engaging musical entertainment presentation.
Transfer and Lift Training	August 31, 2021	Staff members were provided guidance and training for effective lift, transfer, and handling techniques for specific students.
Edsby Parent Portal Sessions	August 31, 2021	Administrators and teachers in GSSD learned how their role as a classroom teacher will impact the information that parents/students are able to view on the Edsby App.
Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) Benchmark Assessment (BAS) Training	September 3, 2021	This session was for Grades 1-6 English Language Arts teachers who had not previously had F&P training in GSSD. The purpose of this session was to provide training for teachers to effectively administer the F&P BAS.
Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Training	September 9, 2021	This training was for new interventionists that will be teaching LLI in the 2021-22 year. The purpose of the session was to train interventionists new to LLI that have not received GSSD LLI training.
Kindergarten: We Thinkers and Heggerty phonemic awareness workshop	October 6, 2021	In this workshop, participants had the chance to explore three new resources: The Early Years Cultural Project Kits, The WeThinkers resource, and The Kindergarten Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum.
Grade 1: Help me Talk About Math	October 12, 2021	In this training session, participants gained an understanding of how to use HMTAM for additional learning ideas and activities along with information on how to administer the assessment.
Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) Refresher	October 21, 2021	In this one-day session participants reviewed strategies for safely defusing anxious, dysregulated, hostile, or violent behavior at the earliest possible stage. If participants have received NVCI 2-day training within the last two years, this course may be used to recertify as recommended by their administrator. Staff are selected for training as needed as discussed with their administrator and Student Services Consultant.
NVCI 2 Day Training	October 26 & 27, 2021	Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® training is two day course in which participants learned to recognize different stages that individuals move through as their behaviour starts to escalate and how to diffuse these behaviors while keeping everyone safe. This training, taught by instructors certified by the Crisis Prevention Institute®, is consistent with the GSSD Administrative Procedure which deals with the restraint and seclusion of students. On Day 1 participants gained a basic understanding of crisis intervention methods. This training emphasized early intervention and nonphysical methods for preventing or managing disruptive behavior. The Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) Personal Safety Techniques for staff were also be demonstrated and practiced in this seminar to prepare staff to safely remove themselves and others from a dangerous situation. Day 2 expanded on crisis intervention methods. This training focused on the study and practice of non-harmful Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention methods, used as a last resort when an individual becomes an immediate danger to self or others.

## PRACTICAL AND APPLIED ARTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Practical and Applied Arts (PAA) courses are an integral part of school studies and have given GSSD students a deeper range of exciting opportunities in their educational landscape. Students in grades 7-12 are able to partake in a number of different courses from construction, and carpentry, mechanics/automotive, to sewing, food studies and commercial cooking. These courses help students develop personal and life skills, gain entry level employment skills or pursue post-secondary education or training.

On October 12, 2021, PAA teachers from across the division met to share their PAA experiences and ideas. The day was a chance to network with other PAA teachers and collaborate on a variety of topics, such as lab safety concerns, PAA budget, and lab upgrades.



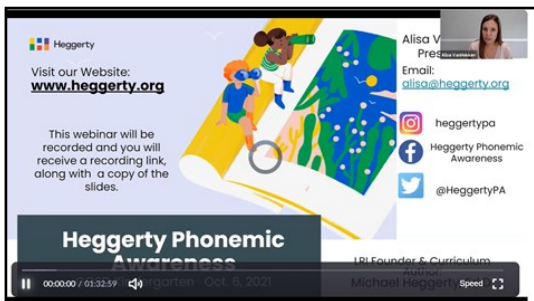
PAA teachers met with the Curriculum Consultants to review outcome based instruction and assessment and then were divided into smaller groups for PAA presentations from their colleagues in their specialized area of expertise.

Mick Parmar, Superintendent of School Operations said October 12 was a day of high-quality learning and will assist teachers in building division-wide capacity.



## HEGGERTY TRAINING

All Student Services and Kindergarten teachers participated in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness training this fall.



*Photo above: Alisa VanHekken joined participants virtually to discuss the Heggerty program.*

The Heggerty program is a resource to engage students in phonemic awareness practice and activities. "Phonemic awareness is the ability to understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds called phonemes, and it's one of the best early predictors for reading success." Alisa VanHekken joined participants through a virtual session to outline the components of the program, the theories around phonemic awareness instruction

and how to utilize the resource for intervention and in kindergarten classrooms.

GSSD is committed to providing teachers with tools that will help them instruct early learners and support their growth in reading and writing.



*Photo above: Christa Beatty, a teacher at Columbia School puts the Heggerty program into action with her students.*

## WILLOW AWARDS

Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards (SYRCA) is a volunteer-run, non-profit, registered charity which began in 2001.

The mission of SYRCA – The Willow Awards, Inc. is to promote reading and celebrate Canadian literature.

Each year, Saskatchewan children and youth vote for Willow Award recipients from finalists nominated in three award categories.

The three categories were established to encourage participation by all children, regardless of the level at which they are reading.

They include:

- The Shining Willow Award for books written for young readers;
- The Diamond Willow Award for books written for upper elementary readers in grades 4 to 6; and,
- The Snow Willow Award for books written for readers in grades 7 & up.

Students can read a number of books, then vote on their favourite in the spring. The student voice is very appealing to young readers, and motivates them to participate in reading as many of these fantastic selections as they can.



Photo above: Aimee Sipple poses in front of the Shining Willow Books for the 2021 year.

GSSD is lucky enough to have a teacher in the division serving on the selection committee for the Shining Willow books. Kamsack Comprehensive Institute Teacher, Aimee Sipple shares her experience.

"I applied to be on the selection committee for the Shining Willow books in the summer of 2020 and was contacted in September 2020 to join the committee. It has been an excellent experience. Books are submitted for consideration and as a selection committee member, my duties are to read and review the books, and participate in discussion related to the books. The books must be Canadian, and care is taken to ensure that diverse voices and experiences are represented. The learning experience has been amazing. My passion for quality picture books is shared with the committee members and our conversations are some of the greatest professional development I have taken part in. I am

proud of the selections we made for this year's Shining Willow consideration, and hope that teachers are enjoying them too!"

Each fall, schools and libraries are invited to submit the ideas and activities they have conducted around the Willows to be eligible for book prizes.

The Willow Awards Gala is held annually where authors of the students' favourite books are presented with their Willow Awards.

Ballots and voting for the current Willow Awards can be found under the VOTE tab on their website here: [Voting Guidelines](#).



## FINDING INDIGENOUS CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

On Friday, October 22, 2021, Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC) welcomed staff from Good Spirit School Division, Prairie Valley School Division and SouthEast Cornerstone School Division, along with representation from the First Nations of, Keeseekoose, Cote, Zagime, Ocean Man and Ochapowace to participate in a full day of professional development.

Finding Indigenous Curriculum Connections provided opportunities for teachers and support staff to explore how to use land-based learning, language, culture, and Treaty teachings as a connection to curriculum that can inspire and make learning come to life for students.

Participants were able to select five from the nine sessions offered: three Land-Based activities; three language activities (Cree, Nakota, Anishinaabe); one equine therapy activity provided by Takoza Teepee Camp; 1 Treaty Teaching activity; or 1 Cultural protocol/ceremony activity.

Staff from Columbia School, Dr. Brass School, Kamsack Comprehensive Institute, and Victoria School, were in attendance.

“Attending the Takoza Teepee Camp was truly an amazing experience! I enjoyed meeting new like-minded individuals and educators from all over our Treaty 4 Territory.”

- Lana Kulak, GSSD staff member

“I learned how to set up a tipi and what each pole represents, I listened to an elder and a gentleman told us about songs, stories and what they represent. I enjoyed meeting new people and seeing old faces.”

~ Joletta Littlewolfe, GSSD staff member

## FEATURE STUDENT



Good Spirit School Division has a long standing Motto of “Students Come First”. The Board has recognized that the primary business involves educating, supporting, and growing outstanding students and individuals. Part of this process is recognizing excellence in student achievement. School staff are encouraged to nominate feature student artists, athletes, leaders, mentors, scholars, and writers. To kick off the Feature Student of 2021, Jenna MacDonald from the GSSD Digital Learning School is being acknowledged as a Feature Writer.

Jenna is a grade four student enrolled in the GSSD Digital Learning School this year through her home boundary school, Yorkdale Central. On the very first day of school this year, her teacher, Mrs. Lechner, received an email from Jenna in which her passion for writing was clearly evident. She shared:

*“I really enjoy writing and wish to be an author some day. Some day I want to go to college, major in English, and maybe start my own publishing company. I’m writing a book already, called Mackenzie of Sycamore Ranch. I got inspiration from Anne of Green Gables. I also really enjoy reading books.”*

Jenna began writing her book in January, 2021. She had taken the time to carefully craft her early 1900's setting and characters, slowly building in the reader's mind clear visuals with her deliberate choice of rich, descriptive language. Her engaging dialogue reflected each character's unique personality (and dialect), and the elements of the story were carefully researched and revised to ensure they accurately reflected the time period. Mrs. Lechner shared,

*“Over the past two months, I have listened to her share her progress with her classmates and me, and have found myself at a loss sometimes for suggestions to offer as improvement to the storyline because it is already so sophisticated and refined. She is 13 chapters and 24 pages in, and still going strong. At the conclusion of each chapter, I find myself eagerly awaiting the next installment of her creative ideas.”*

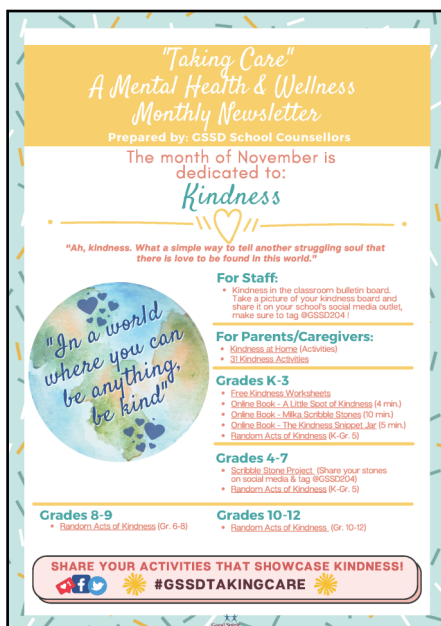
Aside from Jenna’s narrative piece, her talent for writing shows across all of the assignments she completes online. She often submits a written and a typed response for her paragraphs. Her writing always reflects careful editing and advanced vocabulary use that shows wisdom beyond her years. With Jenna's work ethic, leadership skills, and kind nature, she would be a fitting nominee for many categories, but her passion for writing and skill in this area is truly remarkable and worthy of recognition.

# HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

## Long-term Goals

- By June 30, 2022, students will report feeling welcomed, included and feel a sense of belonging and caring at school.
- By June 30, 2022, staff will report feeling welcomed, included and feel a sense of belonging and caring at work.
- By June 30, 2022, students will develop mental fitness (state of well-being and having a positive sense of how we feel, think, and act) to identify emotions and access supports.
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- By June 30, 2022, students will receive timely and responsive evidence-based prevention and intervention services at school.
- By June 30, 2022, students and families will report that they know where to turn for more intensive support when needed.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will enhance the physical facilities occupied by students and staff to ensure health and well-being.
- By June 30, 2022, all high schools will have established alliances for gender and sexual diversity.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCE



Good Spirit School Division counsellors work to provide support services to students, parents and school staff. The guidance and counselling of students is an integral part of the school division. Counsellors also promote personal, educational and career development for students.

In October of 2020, GSSD counsellors from the North, South and Central clusters started "Taking Care" a mental health and wellness resource. The monthly, one-pager newsletter is for students, parents/caregivers, and staff. The one-pager newsletter has a variety of different resources pertaining to that particular month's theme.

School Counsellor, Michelle Goulden says the newsletter aligns with the GSSD Strategic Plan, "The School Counsellor Mental Wellness Monthly Newsletter is provided to bring awareness to many components that contribute to mental wellness and support the goals of the Comprehensive Schools Community Health. It further highlights important elements that support Mental Wellness and provides resources for staff, parents and students."

The November 2021 theme is Kindness. Students, parents/caregivers, and staff are encouraged to utilize the resources, view Taking Care [here](#).

## HARVEST MEATS DONATES.....MEAT



Photo above: Erin Nicolas with the donated boxes of sandwich meat.

Erin Nicolas, the new Indigenous Student Success Lead at Yorkton Regional High School, approached Harvest Meats in October for a donation to support nutrition in the Entayan Room (Indigenous Student Center).

Harvest Meats delivered by donating 21 cases of sandwich meat! Wow!

Nicolas will use this donation to support students from the YRHS and has shared a portion of the donation with Dr. Brass School as well.

Thank you Harvest Meats!



Photo above: A delicious, nutritious sandwich thanks to the donation from Harvest Meat.

## GSSD SUMMER READING CONTEST



Photo above: Winner announced! Kean with Susan Robertson, Curriculum Consultant.

Over the summer months, GSSD students were invited to participate in a Summer Reading Contest.

For every book borrowed from a local library, participant had a chance to win a Coles' bookstore shopping spree worth \$300. There were over 700 entries from July 1 to September 1, 2021. That is a lot of students taking out library books!

One winner was randomly selected from the 700 entries through a computer generated system. P.J. Gillen School student, Kean Ituralde, was the winner. Congratulations Kean! Happy reading!

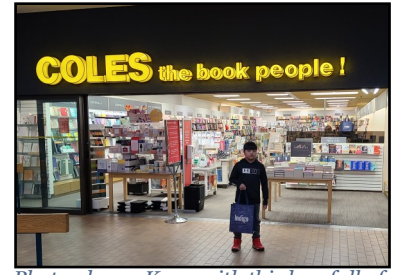


Photo above: Kean with this bag full of books!

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE AT DR. BRASS SCHOOL

Stepping out of the traditional four walls of a classroom and stepping into nature can have profound effects on how children learn. Being outside provides teachers and students the opportunity to use real-life examples to support the



Photo above: Macdonald School in Stockholm is one of the schools in GSSD that utilizes an outdoor learning space.

delivery and understanding of curriculum, encourages holistic development of students, and provides students learning opportunities that are unique to being in nature. A few schools in GSSD have or are starting to bring their outdoor learning spaces to life. With the help of grants and corporate donations, these outdoor learning spaces shine!

Most recently, Dr. Brass School in Yorkton is working towards creating an outdoor learning space. With the addition of various

innovative programs at Dr. Brass, one of their biggest philosophies is to encourage hands on learning. With special programming such as the play based elementary classrooms, Growing Citizens, and their Land based program, it was evident that Dr. Brass needed to begin working towards an outdoor learning space for children to flourish in. A small committee gathered to begin brainstorming what that project may look like and developed a four-year plan:

- Year 1: Outdoor seating and storage
- Year 2: Natural early years playground
- Year 3: Medicine garden and seating area
- Year 4: Develop pathways and planter boxes to finish off space.



Photo above: A GSSD Facility Technician built and stained the benches for the outdoor learning space project at Dr. Brass School.

Currently, the only funding the school received was part of a \$10,000 grant from Mosaic where they allocated \$2,500 towards this project. The committee is hoping to continue to apply for this annually as well as fundraise and apply for other grants. Elora Lake, Vice-principal at Dr. Brass School, shared that they are always looking for community support to help keep the project moving forward, and there has been plenty of positive feedback.



Photo above: Stage one in the outdoor learning space at Dr. Brass School is complete, as new bleachers were made and delivered to the school.



Photo above: Knowledge Keepers Grady Lertat, Glenn Pelletier and Maddie Bellegarde helped Dr. Brass students with a tipi set up for their outdoor learning space.

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 "The feedback from staff and students has been phenomenal.  
 Both are enjoying the outdoor space and it's great to see learning taking place outdoors."  
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- Elora Lake, Vice-principal at Dr. Brass School



## EDUCATION WEEK 2021

Education Week provides an opportunity to recognize the work of our educational professionals and celebrate the learning achievements of Saskatchewan’s students.

The province of Saskatchewan has celebrated Education Week since 1987. This year, Education Week was held October 17 to 23, 2021.

The theme was “Learning for the Future”, which celebrated the role that education and those in the education sector play in creating a bright future for our students and our province. The theme highlighted the importance of education in building our future and the growth that can be achieved through it.

Students’ success would not be possible without the contributions from all members of the education team, including administrators, administrative assistants, teachers, library technicians, bus drivers, custodians, and education professionals. Thank you!

Schools in the division use education week to plan fun and informative activities for children to participate in. Canora Junior Elementary School utilized education week as an opportunity to fundraise for UNICEF. For \$1, on chewing gum day, students were able to bring gum and chew away all day. Other schools, such as Invermay and Langenburg Central School held book fairs, dress up as your future days. Grayson School celebrated the week by virtually hosting different working professionals, allowing students to learn about different opportunities after school and “learning for the future.”



Photo above: Norquay School held a Jersey Day during Education Week.



Photo above: Students in Mr. Muir’s class at Grayson School spoke to Spencer Bomboir about his career in technology, Toronto Argonauts player Josh Hagerty about staying motivated and working hard towards your goals, and Nurse Megan, who shared her experience working in the Northwest Territories.

Provincially, the week highlights other important celebrations, such as Bus Driver Appreciation Day (Monday, October 18, 2021) and Saskatchewan Library Week.



Photo above: Melville Comprehensive School hosted a Bus Driver appreciation breakfast as a show of thanks!



Did you know: GSSD bus drivers transport over 2,800 students traveling more than 20,000 km each day!

Did you know: GSSD employs 130 bus drivers including spare drivers!

Did you know: In one month the GSSD library techs circulate 60,000 books!



Photo above: Resources display at the Centralized Library. This library is utilized by teachers, staff and families.

## MEET A BUS DRIVER

Bus Drivers play an important role within a school division as they are often the first and last person students come in contact with on schools days, ensure the safety of students who ride the bus, and build connections with parents and the administration at each school.

Throughout the 2021-22 school year, the transportation team will be highlighting drivers from across the division.

Read below to learn about two GSSD Bus Drivers.

### Lydia Sliva

- 1. How long have you been driving bus?** I've been driving bus for a really long time—I first received my S-endorsement when I was 20...
- 2. What inspired you to be a bus driver?** Without a doubt it was my mom who inspired me to be a bus driver! I truly admire how she could get all her work done at home as a farmer's wife, have a part-time job in town, contribute to the family income, use my dad as a spare bus driver, and still be able to have time for us six kids! She was always grateful for her bus driving job which she claimed made it possible and gave her the "get-up-and-go!" Her enthusiasm rubbed off on me!
- 3. What other interests do you have?** This old girl was raised on a small mixed farm so it goes without saying that I take much interest in this hobby farm acreage on which we've been blessed to live. This takes me from yard work to gardening, to the farm, to canning, and to cooking. I also enjoy reading and sewing—two hobbies I haven't had much time for because I've been devoted to raising our five children between bus route driving. Now come the grandchildren—all grandsons so far...great start to a baseball team and they'll sure come in handy at haying time. Yes, I wholeheartedly embrace being a "bus driving Baba!"
- 4. Do you have a pet?** You bet I have a pet. On a hobby farm there's always room for one more and as a bus driver there is time to enjoy them. I'll just tell you about a couple more popular critters that live here...there's Daisy, the bottle-fed sheep; Clarinova, the guard alpacas; Henny-Penny, the house yard Bantam hen and chicks; Henry, the house cat; and, Toby, the dog. As soon as the bus door opens, this is the critter that makes his way on board to search out things for the lost and found department!
- 5. What adventures over the course of your career have you found particularly satisfying?** In reality, every day is an adventure for a school bus driver! There is no "ho-hum" when your cargo is alive and loving! There is nothing more rewarding than making eye contact with that little kindergartener as they find you after a first day at school. Only a bus driver knows. It has also been very satisfying to mentor others to obtain their S endorsements! Their success is mine!
- 6. If you could invite anyone to be a guest on your bus, who would it be and why?** If I could have someone ride on my bus it would be my mom because she would be so impressed! She would be amazed at how "luxurious" my bus is and how entertaining the little passengers are! She would be so proud!
- 7. What is your favorite travel destination?** My favorite travel destination is around my route and back again—my totally favorite place is home—there is no place I'd rather be than right here.
- 8. Would you recommend being a bus driver?** By my actions, I make my recommendations to be a school bus driver—it's all about the lifestyle, if you only need to supplement the household income. Being a bus driver enables you to:
  - ⇒ Be at home to do your own "stuff"
  - ⇒ Get a "fill-in" job,
  - ⇒ Be off for holidays
  - ⇒ Take your pre-school aged children with you "to work"
  - ⇒ Stay "regular"
  - ⇒ Drive a luxurious company vehicle
  - ⇒ Sit in a corner office with a view
  - ⇒ Transport the most precious commodity.



Photo above: GSSD bus driver Lydia Sliva.

Continued on next page...

## MEET A BUS DRIVER continued...

### Maryann Kopeck

I have driven school bus for 48 years. A board member came to see me and asked if I wanted a job driving bus, I thought "why not," and I've never looked back. I have a lot of interests, which I was able to do because of the job I had, with a lot of time off. I trained horses, raised Thoroughbreds and Charolais cattle, and rode race horses on the circuit for seven years. Now I do a lot of snowmobiling and motorcycling. I live on a farm so I have many pets.

One day when I went to pick up Canora band students, I walked down the hallway and saw the grade 11 and 12s were going to the UK, I asked the principal who can go, he said if I wanted to go I was welcome. Two years later, I went on the UK trip with Canora students. My greatest adventures were a trip I took to Europe and one to the United Kingdom (UK), which was also because I drive bus. These trips were during Easter breaks. I took a trip to Disneyworld with family during February break. I also went to the Atlantic provinces during summer break.

My favorite travel destination was Ireland and Switzerland, my next plans are Iceland.

If I could invite someone on my bus, it would have been a little three year old girl, because she wanted to ride a half mile on the bus her mother rode.



Photo above: GSSD bus driver  
Maryann Kopeck

If you enjoy children and enjoy having all of the holidays off that the students do, I would recommend being a bus driver. All the amazing places you can go and all the things you can do!

**You can become a driver too!  
Call 306-786-5505 to get started today.**

## COLONY SCHOOLS

GSSD currently has 27 schools of which three of them are Colony schools. These schools are Bear Stream School, Hofer Colony School, and Silver Stream School.

- Bear Stream is located north east of Kamsack.
- Hofer Colony School is located west of Norquay.
- Silver Stream School is located south west of Yorkton.

The three colony schools are supported by a Principal/Teacher who delivers programming for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12.

These Colony schools are unique in their own way and are located right on site of their respective Colonies. Additionally, each Colony offers German language, taught by a member of the Colony.



## EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Long-term Goal

- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will reduce barriers and enhance student success in each functional area by demonstrating improvement in services through the development, review, and revision of administrative procedures.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will reduce barriers and enhance student success in each functional area by demonstrating improvement in services through the development, review, and revision of processes.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will implement systemic and transparent approaches to find efficiencies and increase value for money allowing the Division to respond to the challenges of student and staff needs.

### CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL BUS AND PARENT TRAFFIC CONTROLS

In August of 2021, the Facilities Department completed a traffic controls sign project at Canora Composite School (CCS).

The project was put into motion when the CCS School Community Council (SCC) approached the facilities department with concerns regarding traffic safety surrounding the parking lot and bus drop off at the front of the school.

After meetings between the SCC, Administration, Facilities and the Board Member for the Canora area, a plan was established to mitigate some risks involving vehicle traffic, parent pick up and bus parking.

A cross walk was created with concrete jersey barriers and signage to lead kids across the parking lot in a designated area. As well new signs were installed to indicate parent pickup areas away from the main staff parking lot.

Signs were also added to corral bus parking in an area that allowed pedestrians and drivers the ability to see if any traffic was coming through the parking lot. Entrance/exit signs as well as a new instructional sign and barrier free parking sign were installed to assist in organizing the flow of traffic.

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*“The traffic improvements for student drop off has certainly made it an asset to CCS student safety and well-being. Parents are finding the street-side drop zone efficient and effective and most importantly, safe for the children exiting their vehicles.*

*It took a little getting used to but for the most part, I have seen a great flow of traffic that seems to have solidified what the SCC was trying to accomplish in the safety of the students even though there were no incidents that motivated this change, rather a proactive approach to eliminate any potential of an accident happening.*

*Good work on both the CCS student safety group and GSEC transportation team in preparing this new traffic zone that should have been implemented many years ago. Good work by all!”*

– Shannon Leson, Board Member

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Photo above: A cross walk was created using jersey barriers.



Photo above: New signs up at Canora Composite School.

## VACCINATION ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Following the direction of the Provincial Government, a focus group representing LEADS, SASBO, and the SSBA drafted a sample vaccination requirement administrative procedure that school divisions could consider for implementation. It was understood and respected that each school division has policies that include all potential risks associated with the safety, health and well-being of all staff and students for whom they are responsible.

As a result of this work, GSSD Senior Leadership worked closely with In-School Administration, Labour Groups and the Board of Education to craft a COVID-19 safety administrative procedures for all GSSD employees. As of November 1, 2021, all GSSD employees (regular, casual, and replacement) will be required to prove they are fully vaccinated. Employees who do not provide proof of vaccination will be required to provide evidence of a negative test result weekly. GSSD will be providing COVID-19 self-assessments to employees free of charge until December 18, 2021. Determinations have yet to be made related to the cost of testing from January to June 2022. Conversations are underway with the Ministry of Education related to the availability of self-testing kits in rural communities. GSSD will be providing additional direction to employees before the end of November.

## ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

### Long Term Goals

- By June 30, 2022, all students will achieve a 2% increase in student attendance based on the June 2021 data.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will increase our organization's cultural competencies through division-wide processes and professional learning that grow our collective understanding about Indigenous identity, histories, worldview, and systemic barriers.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will demonstrate a commitment to the establishment of new and reaffirmed partnerships.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will actualize an Early Years Engagement Network to enhance educational opportunities for early years students.
- By June 30, 2022, GSSD will establish a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Council to enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students.

### NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION



*Photo above: Photo taken prior to masking mandate.*

On August 24, 2021, 12 teachers new to GSSD arrived at the Good Spirit Education Complex to receive a division orientation. The day was intended to ensure that the newest teaching staff start out with a strong foundation at the onset of their career with GSSD.

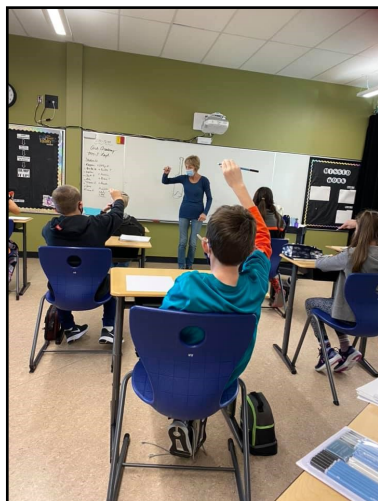
As part of the orientation, the newest professional staff were introduced to the Director of Education, Superintendents of School Operations, Consultants, and Coaches who will support them throughout their first year and beyond.

The morning began with an overview of GSSD priorities and strategic planning. Teachers then rotated through a series of informative sessions: What's Your WHY?; Critical Administrative Procedures session; understanding the LINC agreement; and, navigating Atrieve.

In the afternoon, teachers learned how to achieve their why, professional growth plans and performance evaluations, and accessing library resources.

Good Spirit would like to welcome the new teachers who started the 2021-22 school year!

## ART AT LUNCH



Artists in action! Langenburg Central School (LCS) has partnered with local visual artist Jan Layh, to work with students in creating art. Layh is President of the Langenburg Arts Council and chairs the Visual Arts Committee which organizes the Annual Langenburg Adjudicated Art Show and the Annual Art Gala & Auction.

Layh is bringing her love for art with a six-week art class. The course is being offered to LCS middle years and high school students over the lunch hour, until December 3, 2021.

*Photo to the left: Visual artist Jan Layh is a self-taught artist having learned her skill through years of practice and experience.*

## CROSS COUNTRY SEASON KICKS OFF ECDA A SEASON

School staff carried out their usual magic in the first weeks of the school year getting students settled back into the classrooms and promoting safe and productive practices. Pencils were sharpened, and books were cracked open. A return to learning occurred, however, students were not just excited about that element. The 2021-22 school year also met a new beginning for a return to extra-curricular activities.

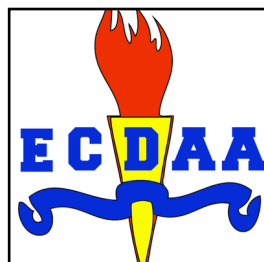


To make this return as COVID-19 safe as possible, a committee of East Central District Athletics Association members was created. Guidelines and references were created which would apply to all activities. The real focus of these meetings was to move forward slowly and cautiously with a goal that students could enjoy activities in the long run. Every activity group had to carry this responsibility. No group wanted to be that activity that brought a halt to extracurricular events, and no group was presented with a greater challenge than cross country running.

Cross country running events are among the most inclusive events with many students from Grade 3-12 taking part. Events are attended by hundreds of student athletes with the Saltcoats Autumn Summit seeing over 1,000 in pre-covid times. Regularly, a few hundred parents are also out spectating. With COVID-19 transmission remaining as a real risk, a committee went about planning the events differently.



In order to enhance health and safety at each event, additional custodial time was provided to sanitize washrooms every hour on the hour. Also, participants were highly encouraged to bring a bagged lunch as a way of minimizing risks at a canteen.



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## CROSS COUNTRY continued...

Yorkdale Central student Kelson Hawreliuk shared his feelings on participating again. *"I'm happy. It was fun to be back. I was also nervous because it felt like forever since I had the opportunity to play school sports."* For the record, Hawreliuk did just fine, as he won his respective category.

Extra-curricular activities are often referred to as the other side of education. It was great to bring athletics back in a safe way. ECDA has the same goal for all its activities, and it wishes a safe season to all activities, teams, and players!



Congratulations to all Cross Country athletes. A special congratulations to Langenburg Central School student, Jerin Keough, on receiving a Silver in the Intermediate Boys at Provincials.

Below are the results from the 2021 Cross Country Districts.



### 2021 Cross Country District Results

SENIOR BOYS (16 and up)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Toby Olynyk	Canora
SILVER	Samuel Velasco	YRHS
BRONZE	Jon Fetsch	SHHS
SENIOR GIRLS (16 and up)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Belen Reed	SHHS
SILVER	Jordyn Thomas	Kamsack
BRONZE	Cadence Campeau	Kamsack
JUNIOR BOYS (u16)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Hunter Lamb	Canora
SILVER	Porter Wolkowski	Canora
BRONZE	Cole Marcinkoski	Canora
JUNIOR GIRLS (u16)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Isabelle Easton	YRHS
SILVER	Meadow Ostafie	Canora
BRONZE	Tala Coleman	MCS
INTERMEDIATE BOYS (u15)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Jerin Keough	LCS
SILVER	Michael Mann	St. Henrys
BRONZE	Colby Halliday	YRHS
INTERMEDIATE GIRLS (u15)		
	Name:	School:
GOLD	Chloe Hove	SHHS
SILVER	Ruby Pollock	Churchbridge
BRONZE	Zoe Bolme	YRHS

## NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

September 30th marked the first ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the day was also recognized as Orange Shirt Day. The day was an important step in the reconciliation process, as it allowed us to pause and recognize the intergenerational harm that residential schools have caused to Indigenous families and communities.

Across the Division, staff and students were encouraged to take actionable steps towards reconciliation. On Thursday, September 30, 2021, GSSD virtually hosted three Indigenous guest speaker to honour the day, Leslie Wilson, Clorice Delorme, and Andrew Quewezance.

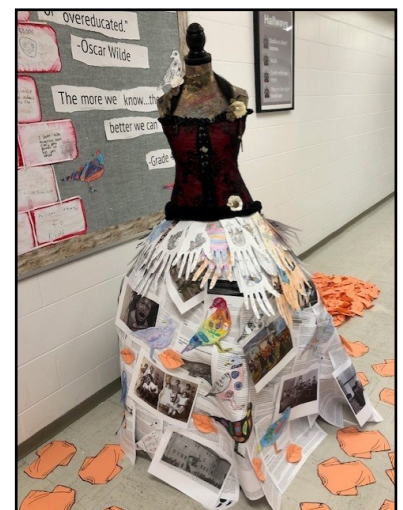
All students and staff were asked to wear orange for Orange Shirt Day however, schools also held other events and activities to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Aside from the guest speakers, GSSD created the 2021 School Reconciliation Challenge, where the question was posed, "What Does Reconciliation Mean to You?". The purpose of the challenge was to inspire all students, staff, and GSSD families to creatively express what reconciliation means to them and allow them to begin to image a future of togetherness among Indigenous Peoples, and all Canadians, regardless of race, culture or religion.

Indigenous Student Success Consultants, Jess Armstrong and Clorice Delorme, received over 80 entries. Winners will be announced within the coming weeks.

Thank you to students and staff for continuing to take steps towards reconciliation.

There is no reconciliation without truth.





## KINDERGARTEN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT DAY

Kindergarten families were welcomed into their child's classroom during the GSSD Family Engagement window. Teachers planned a variety of activities to get to know their students and families better and to gain perspective through the eyes of the caregivers. To accommodate each school setting, some interactions occurred through Zoom or through take-home activities that were brought back and shared. Teachers also invited their families in and provided a variety of activities. These engaging events allowed children and families to connect with the school, build relationships and participate in learning opportunities.



Photo above: Macdonald School family engagement.

At Macdonald School, families learned about the zones of regulation through a book called "Good Morning Sunshine". Then they created calming kits to take home and use together.

In Saltcoats, the Kindergarten students and their families participated in a scavenger hunt sharing their results in the Seesaw app. This gave caregivers the opportunity to learn about Seesaw and engage in kindergarten learning activities with their children.

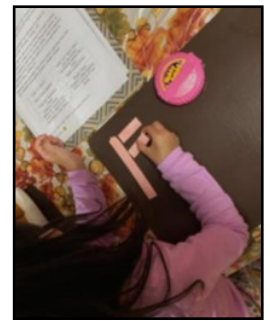
Both Yorkdale Central and M.C. Knoll Schools gathered their families for an outdoor picnic giving them the chance to get to connect and allow students and caregivers to become comfortable with the school, classroom and playground.



Photo above: Families at Columbia School enjoying the engagement day.

At Norquay School, Kindergarten students were given the challenge to create a wire sculpture representing their family. The sculptures were brought back to school and shared with their classmates.

At Langenburg Central School, families engaged in the creation of a classroom scrapbook, thank you cards and a Thanksgiving centerpiece. Caregivers commented that "the activities were fun, and the time spent together was valuable."



Photos above: Students and families took part in a scavenger hunt at Saltcoats school.

## CHIEF CADMUS DELORME VISITS YORKTON REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



Photo above: Chief Cadmus Delorme speaks to students and staff at YRHS.

Chief Cadmus Delorme of Cowessess First Nation was invited to speak to the Grade 9-12 students and staff at Yorkton Regional High School (YRHS) on September 2, 2021. GSSD Board Chair Bob Simpson and newly appointed YRHS Superintendent Mick Parmar were in attendance at the event. Chief Delorme was brought in by the YRHS Administrative Team to reaffirm the school's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

As a school, the YRHS has taken some great initial steps towards reconciliation. A tipi was erected a few years back to show all who enter the school that they are a welcoming and inclusive place for First Nation families. The Entayan Room was created to assist First Nation's students as they follow the school's motto of 'Striving for Excellence.' The Entayan Room overseen by ISSL (Indigenous Student Success Lead), Erin Nicolas, is used for a myriad of things including: providing a safe landing for students in the morning, nutrition breaks, cultural teaching, and educational support. This year the school is offering Indigenous Studies 10 (Native Studies 10) as a compulsory credit class

in the place of History 10 so that all students begin to learn the history of the land we live on. As the school continues to move forward along the pathway to Reconciliation, school administration thought that bringing in Chief Delorme would be a great way to do so as he would share his perspectives on various timely topics.

*Continued on next page...*

## CHIEF CADMUS VISIT continued...

Chief Delorme has been an advocate for change since he became the Chief of Cowessess First Nation. When he chose to run for Chief in the Band Election back in 2015 at the age of 33, he said, "It is time that our generation started giving back." And give back he has, the 2015 Future 40 Winner has had many victories, as a fiercely competitive golfer, he is the past Mid-Amateur Saskatchewan Golf Champion, his ability on the links earned him the nickname of, 'Can't Miss,' but, perhaps one of his greatest victories came this past year when he hosted a press conference on Cowessess First Nation with Premier Scott Moe and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in attendance. At the press conference he signed a landmark agreement with Ottawa to become the first Indigenous Nation to return jurisdiction over children in care to his community. An act that has set the stage for many First Nation's to follow.

Leadership is tough, and Chief Delorme has also experienced tragedy in recent months, with the discovery of 751 unmarked graves near the former Marieval Indian Residential School. Having lead his First Nation through this troubling discovery he was quick to say, 'We all inherited this, nobody here today created residential schools, nobody here today created the Indian Act, nobody here today created the 60's scoop, but we all inherited it and just have to acknowledge that people are healing and people are hurt. Let's do something about it!'

Chief Delorme spoke to the students for an hour injecting humour into a history lesson told from an Indigenous perspective. He shared three legendary tales with the students; the story of the Dogs' Tails, the story of the Creator and the Moose, and the story of the Hummingbird and the Raven. He spoke of a term he coined as 'accidental racism,' behaving the way we sometimes do when we don't know any better. He then reminded all in attendance that now know better. He used the analogy of driving a car down the road in a way to get the audience to understand where we have been and where we are now. Most importantly he spoke of where the car's headlights are pointed to in the future, a future that the students in attendance will play a large role in creating.

Once he finished up with his presentation within the Anne Portnuff Theatre, Chief Delorme invited interested students to meet him in the Entayan Room. Approximately 30 students and staff were able to meet with Cadmus in the Entayan Room. He entertained questions from the students and told more stories. Perhaps the most powerful message was what he spoke of with regards to the healing and hurting that is going on with the discovery of unmarked graves at former Residential School sites across the country. He mentioned that the grandparents of the students are suffering a great deal because these discoveries are opening up old scars. Chief Delorme told the students in attendance that the best way to help their grandparents is to take advantage of all that is offered at the YRHS and achieve an education and go on to be productive young men and women. Making your grandparents proud of who and what you have become is the best way to help them heal.

In the aftermath of Chief Delorme's visit planning is underway to take advantage of the new connection formed between the YRHS and Cowessess First Nation. One YRHS teacher in particular, Perry Ostapowich, who teaches Indigenous Studies 10 is looking forward to travelling with students to Delorme's First Nation. The idea was presented by Chief Delorme as an opportunity for students from both schools to get a better understanding of the world we live in. Cowessess students would be invited to visit the YRHS in return. Vice-Principal Kyle also spoke of potentially having some of the YRHS Football Players working with the Cowessess team as they are fielding a 6-man Football team on the First Nation. The experiences would be great for all involved. All of this hinging of course on how things progress with the ability to continue to keep kids safe and healthy during the ongoing pandemic.



*Photo above: Chief Cadmus Delorme and students in the Entayan Room.*

## TAKE ME OUTSIDE DAY

Taking the classroom outside is what it's all about for "Take Me Outside Day", a Canadian classroom incentive.

In 2011, Colin Harris, founder and Executive Director of Take Me Outside ran over 7,600 kilometres from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, British Columbia, to raise awareness of the importance of regular outdoor time.

Along the way, Harris visited 80 schools, and met with almost 20,000 students, talking about finding the balance between the amount of time outdoors and in front of screens.

To celebrate the end of Harris' journey and to continue raising awareness, Take Me Outside Day was established. The day serves as an invitation to schools to extend the classroom beyond four walls and a desk and to engage with school grounds and natural areas.



*Photo above: Land Based Learning for Take Me Outside Day at Grayson School with Clorice Delorme, Indigenous Student Success Consultant.*

This year, Take Me Outside Day was a full week! Speakers and activities were scheduled from October 18-22, 2021. Events across the Division focused on deepening connections with Indigenous perspectives, strengthening health and well-being, and increasing knowledge on climate change and the environment.

Over the course of the week, they saw 8,900 educators and nearly 400,000 learners across the country join in on the celebrations.



*Photo to the left and above: Students at Churchbridge Public School spent time outside on writing "Thank You" messages to health care workers for Take Me Outside Day.*



*Photos above: Students from Macdonald School enjoyed the beautiful weather by taking part in various activities outside on Take Me Outside Day.*



## YORKTON REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SMUDGING CEREMONY

On a beautiful fall day, the Yorkton Regional High School Native Studies 10 classes spent time with Indigenous Student Success Consultant, Jess Armstrong, as she led the students through a First Nation Smudge Ceremony.

Smudging is a cleansing ceremony practiced by many Indigenous people and involves the use of the four sacred plant medicines, cedar, tobacco, sweetgrass and sage. In the smudging ceremony, the plant medicine is lit, and the resulting smoke is cupped with the hands and washed over the hands, head, and body of a person. This is done to release negativity and to allow individuals to think good things, see good things, hear good things, speak good things and to walk in a good way or on a positive path in life.

Smudging in schools is typically done using sage but may be done with sweetgrass depending on the situation. It is always optional and done in a respectful way with parental or guardian permission.



*Photo above: Mr. Ostapowich's and Mrs. Jones' students learn about the importance of smudging before the ceremony begins. Out of respect to Indigenous culture, photos and videos are not taken during a Smudge Ceremony. (Photo taken prior to ceremony)*

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION

**Focusing  
in on ...**

For this edition of the “In focus” we are focusing in on Yorkton Regional High School (YRHS) Counsellor Louise Lulashnyk.

Anīn šikwa, Louise Lulashnyk nitišinihkās, Anihšināpēhkwē keeseekoose iškonikanink nitōnci.

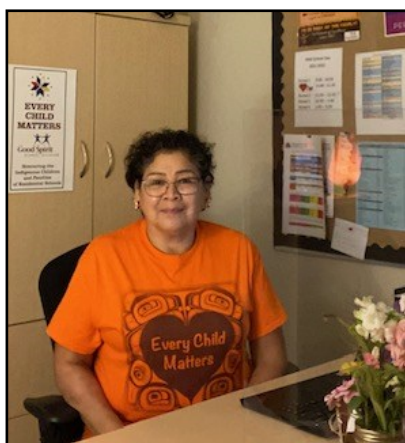
Hello, my name is Louise Lulashnyk, I am an anihšināpēh woman from Keeseekoose First Nation, and a third-generation residential school survivor.

I was hired in late October 2020 by GSSD as a School Counsellor at YRHS, with the focus being addictions. In 2012, my husband, Randy, and I moved to Yorkton from Dryden Ontario as empty nesters. Shortly after moving to Yorkton, we became permanent caregivers to three children, and inherited a fourth in 2018. I have always had a heart for children who face unfortunate circumstances that are out of their control. If I could, my home would be open to every youth that needs a safe place to call home. Hence my career choice, if I can't give them a home, then I will give them a listening ear and caring heart .

I have been previously employed by GSSD in the early 2000's as a Liaison/Saulteaux teacher. In 2006, we moved our family to Dryden, Ontario, where I was employed with Child & Family Services as a Child Care Worker and Parent Aide. In the fall of 2014, I was hired by YTC Education/GSSD Invitational Shared Services Initiative where I remained for three years. It was during this period that I realized I needed to educate myself on addictions and mental wellbeing to better serve and help our youth and families.



*Photo above: Louise enjoying a family vacation in Banff.*



*Photo above: Louise in her office at YRHS.*

In 2017, I made the decision to enroll in a two-year diploma course, Mental Health and Wellness (Addictions). Understanding what trauma and intergenerational trauma is, along with the effects it has on families, and youth has had a huge impact on how I interact with students and families. Learning to recognize signs and symptoms of trauma and establishing a trauma informed approach with students is vital in case management. Youth don't just display troublesome behaviors because they wake up one day and say to themselves, “today I'm going to refuse to cooperate with the adults in my life” or “today I will no longer engage in classroom learning”. Those behaviors or symptoms are often the results of what's happening in their environment or the results of a personal traumatic event or events. Addictions is often a symptom of some type of trauma, with alcohol and drug addiction being the most common. Other types of addiction that are common in youth is gaming, social media, electronics (cell phone) and self-harm. Taking the time to understand and gather knowledge of each students' personal story and family history as they reach out

on their own or are referred to me as a School Counsellor is of great value. This helps to build a trusting relationship, as you take time to listen to their stories. I provide education, support and understanding when offering addictions counselling to the students along with some simple goal setting.

It will be a year on November 2nd that I began working at the YRHS. I am still learning and making adjustments to deliver a program that will positively impact each students' personal wellbeing. I am very grateful to GSSD for the opportunity to utilize my experiences and knowledge I have has a Mental Health and Addictions counsellor. Mekwec (Thank You)

### GSSD FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

<b>Our Motto</b>	Students Come First
<b>Our Mission</b>	Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures
<b>Our Values</b>	Belonging, Respect, Responsibility, Learning, Nurturing, and Perseverance
<b>Our Vision</b>	Learning Without Limits...Achievement For All