

IN FOCUS

WITH THE GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

FROM THE DIRECTOR

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Greetings from the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) as we present the November and December edition of our In Focus.

The months of November and December have held significant events, from Remembrance Day ceremonies in November to festive holiday celebrations in December.

During the busy holiday season, marked by Christmas festivities, engaging activities, and concerts, we take a moment to reflect on the spirit of community. These events not only bring joy but also serve as impactful initiatives for engagement among families and communities, fostering relationships that endure well beyond the holiday season.

A special note of appreciation is extended to our dedicated staff, committed students, supportive families, and generous community members. Your collective efforts play a pivotal role in the success of these activities, crafting moments that shape the very essence of our GSSD community.

Amidst the celebratory atmosphere, our community united for a historic event—the Good Spirit School Division's inaugural Round Dance for Truth and Reconciliation, held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. This momentous gathering symbolized a significant step towards understanding, unity, and healing. We express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated and contributed to this remarkable moment in our shared journey.

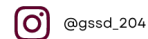
I invite you to explore the stories within this edition of the In Focus which highlight great happenings within GSSD. Additionally, stay connected with us on our social media platforms, where we recognize and celebrate the dedication and contributions of both students and staff to our community.

The holidays are a special time, and we recognize their unique significance. We wholeheartedly send you our warmest wishes for a safe and heartfelt holiday season, hoping it is filled with peaceful and joyous moments.

Quintin M. Robertson
Director of Education/CEO



Pictured above: Quintin Robertson speaks at the first GSSD Round Dance for Truth and Reconciliation, standing with organizers Robert Severight (GSSD Cultural Advocate) and Erin Nicolas (GSSD Indigenous Student Success Lead).



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STUDENTS COME FIRST.

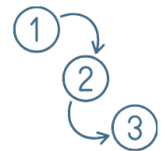
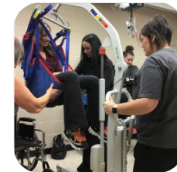
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HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Improving student outcomes
- Implementing the "Inspiring Success" Policy
- Developing GSSD leaders
- Ensuring consistent practices across GSSD schools
- Delivering high-quality teaching and learning resources
- Providing equal access to technology



GSSD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Professional development (PD) plays a crucial role in GSSD's commitment to high quality teaching and learning. Aligned with the long-term goals of improving student outcomes, implementing the "Inspiring Success" Policy, developing GSSD leaders, ensuring consistent practices across GSSD schools and delivering high-quality teaching and learning resources, PD remains a cornerstone of these efforts. Throughout the first half of the school year, GSSD has conducted multiple professional development sessions for staff.

PD Event	Date	Topic/Outcome
Division-Wide Professional Development and Prep Day	Nov. 10/23	This day was designated for schools to unite as a team and discuss the progress of the school year and upcoming events. School teams valued the time to gather and dedicate time to school preparation.
Aboriginal Coaching Model (ACM)	Nov. 10/23	The ACM identified the need for a national coach training curriculum that reflects the uniqueness of Indigenous culture, values and lifestyles. Originally designed for coaches of First Nation, Métis and Inuit heritage, the program has been expanded to include non-Indigenous coaches working within Indigenous communities and with Indigenous people.
Transferring-Lifting-Relocation (TLR) Training Course	Nov. 10/23	The training followed the guidelines of the TLR Training Program through the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health. The course consisted of <i>Object Moving and Client Moving</i> sections with applied practice. Check out more details on our "Focusing In On..." section of this release! (last page)
Practical & Applied Arts (PAA) Professional Learning Corner	Nov. 21/23	PAA Teachers and Administrators gathered for information, updates and discussion regarding Practical and Applied Arts throughout the Division.
Leading to Learn Signpost #2	Nov. 30/23	GSSD Administrators attended their second Leading to Learn Signpost to expand on topics that are related to Anti-Racism education.
Mental Health First Aid - First Nations Training	Dec. 4-6/23	The GSSD Indigenous Education Team gathered at the Good Spirit Education Complex for three days of Mental First Aid training, specifically geared towards First Nations.



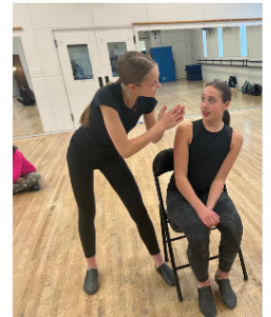
HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

DR. BRASS PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS "OVER AND UNDERSTANDING"

On Monday, December 11th, the Dr. Brass Performing Art Academy presented "Over and Understand" - a drama showcasing a collection of short scenes, sharing students' ideas of Connection, Understanding and Forgiveness. Under the direction of their drama coach, Carrie Pengilly and Performing Arts teacher, Tammy Kustersky, students explored the skill of Collective Creation. During this process - students receive prompts or ideas as starting points. Through brainstorming and improvisation, students themselves create their scene. There are no scripts and all scenes exist only in the minds of the actors.



In a world where ideas of communication are changing, sometimes dividing generations, these students explored the concept through different times, places and characters. Some scenes were comedic and some were thought provoking. All had one thing in common, how do we communicate with one another to reach a level of understanding or acceptance? As one audience member stated, (the students showed) "that connections, understanding and forgiveness take many different forms and mean different things to different people". Our hope is that these students, through their creation, will inspire others to connect, understand and forgive others, considering that everyone's perspective is important and valued. Congratulations to our Dr. Brass Performing Arts students for a brilliant and creative performance. A special thank you to Miss Carrie Pengilly of Free My Muse Theatre Company for always sharing her talents and inspiration with these actors.



If you would like the Dr. Brass Performing Arts Academy to visit your school, please contact Performing Arts teacher Tammy Kustersky or Vice Principal Chantal Kitchen at Dr. Brass.

STURGIS COMPOSITE TURNS A RAINY DAY INTO SCIENCE EXPLORATION!

On a rainy December day, the Sturgis Composite School (SCS) Science Club seized the ideal chance to engage in scientific exploration during their noon hour. Founded by an enthusiastic Grade 11 student with a keen interest in all things science, the club welcomes students of all grades, with a notable enthusiasm from SCS's younger learners. Activities are chosen by the Grade 11 student in consultation with SCS's senior science teacher, who provides a concise overview of the necessary scientific principles. Meetings occur every two or three weeks during the lunch hour in the laboratory and are always enjoyed by all participants!



HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE WILLOW AWARDS LAUNCH WINNERS OF 2023 IS PJ GILLEN!

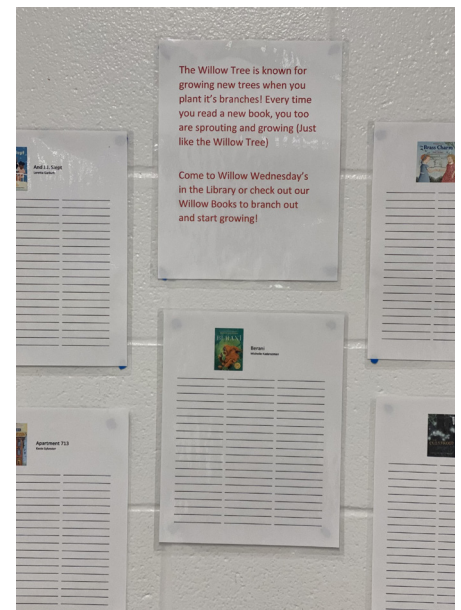
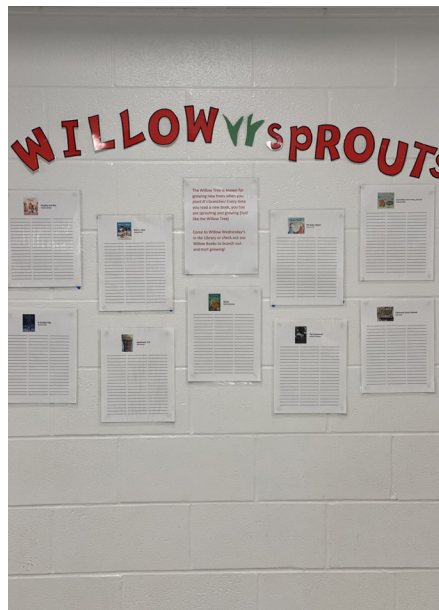


P.J. Gillen school is buzzing with excitement after winning the Willow Awards Launch. The Launch Winners are the recipients of the full set of 30 Willow nominated books for this year and students are already exploring these wonderful titles written by Canadian authors! In addition to winning the Launch, P.J. Gillen was also selected to host the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala in the spring and staff and students are thrilled to be able to share this with the community.

What the Willow Awards Board found intriguing about PJ's submissions for both the launch and the Gala was the idea of "Willow Sprouts" and the symbolism of willow trees that would be tied into their programming with their students. PJ staff thought that it would be interesting to investigate the symbolism of willow trees and see how that symbolism could also represent literacy and the Willow Awards in their school.

Through this research, it was found that willow trees symbolize adaptability, flexibility, and that they are also known for easily sprouting new trees when their branches are planted. This information led to the idea that reading itself is a form of "sprouting" and that every time we read we have planted a new seed that will eventually grow and make us more flexible and adaptable as people (not unlike the willow tree itself).

While reading the Willow nominated books in the library, PJ students are having conversations about the messages these authors have for their readers and how those ideas can be applied to the "real world." These conversations also lead to discussions about how these stories make them more adaptable and flexible as people and what they have learned. Every time a new Willow book is read, classes and students have their names listed on the "Willow Sprouts" wall outside the library to symbolize the new learning that has taken place (or has "sprouted") through their reading. The students are also talking about what makes books enjoyable for them (or not) so that they are prepared to make their votes for their favorite books in March! The Grade 6 and 7 classes from the high school are also going to participate so that all levels of the books will be celebrated by kids who have read them at the gala.



Overall, Panda staff and students are very much looking forward to reading more of these titles and having the opportunity to hand awards to Canadian authors right in their very own school. The SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala is slated to take place in Esterhazy on May 24th, 2024.

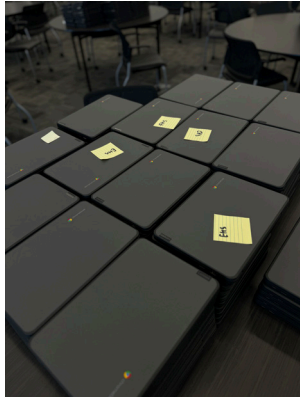
HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE GSSD TECH DEPARTMENT WORKS TO DEPLOY 895 NEW CHROMEBOOKS!



The initial delivery date for the 900 new Chromebooks was set for December 4th. Fortunately, due to sufficient stock availability, the order was fulfilled ahead of schedule, and the Chromebooks arrived on November 15th. While the original deployment date communicated to schools was during the Christmas break, the Tech Department, with the collective efforts of Terren, Ravi, Randy, Akshat, and Cory, efficiently unboxed and prepared the devices for deployment the day after their arrival.

Thanks to the incredible work of the GSSD Tech Team, the first batch of Chromebooks was ready for rollout on November 27th, a full month earlier than initially anticipated. This early deployment provides schools with extra time to prepare the devices for student use. With only 250 devices remaining, GSSD is on the cusp of achieving the 1:1 ratio in grades 4 to 12, a milestone expected to be reached by this time next year. Much gratitude is extended to the dedicated efforts of the Tech Department for making this successful and timely deployment possible.



Pictured to the left: The GSSD Tech Department worked diligently in the Birch Room to prepare and deploy 895 Chromebooks about a month ahead of schedule!

COLUMBIA SCHOOL GRADE 8 STUDENTS HOST THE 2023 CULTURAL FAIR!

Grade 8 students from Columbia School spent a few weeks researching and preparing for the annual Culture Fair, which was held on Thursday, December 14, 2023. As part of their Social Studies and English Language Arts curricula, students learned about the meaning of culture, how it impacts our Canadian cultural diversity, what role immigration continues to play in cultural diversity, and why it is important to maintain one's cultural identity.

Students selected one country and they researched that country in seven key areas. They prepared a display with a sample of a traditional food from that country and answered questions about their culture from other people as they toured through the gym. Younger students and visitors enjoyed learning about the different countries and tasting various prepared foods. Congratulations to all Grade 8s on their successful and engaging presentations!



HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

KAMSACK COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTE OFFERS BRAND NEW “EMERGENCY SERVICES” COURSE

Just how heavy is the gear that firefighters wear, and how does a fire hydrant work? Students at KCI are being offered the chance to answer these questions and more through a brand-new high school course being offered there this fall! The students enrolled in “Emergency Services” are learning about the science of fire, fire behavior and the various types of fires, extinguishment techniques, and have begun examining the gear and tools that firefighters use daily.



(Left to right): Serenity Cote, Sahara Badger, Arvin Pasaporte, Jesse Gigun, Talan Markel



To supplement the in-class portion, the students have been visiting the local fire hall and using some of the extra gear to get a “feel” for just how bulky and heavy it is. Grade 11 student Arvin Pasaporte says, “I enjoy visiting the fire station, and the hands-on part of the class. It’s nice to learn about something in the classroom and then have the opportunity to apply those skills with the real tools and gear that the firefighting professionals use.” Another Grade 11 student,

Serenity Cote, added, “I like the course because I love wearing the equipment and learning about the different tools and their functions and purposes. It’s one thing to learn about the types of fire from a textbook, and how to extinguish them, but then being able to see the training that firefighters have to do to practice their skills, it’s really quite amazing. It has been a unique experience from a high school class so far.”

Students have also begun looking at the various hand tools that a firefighter would be expected to use at a typical fire scene call. In the new year, students will learn more about the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) side of Emergency Services and basic first aid. They also plan to work with volunteers from the local fire department to extinguish fires in a controlled situation, under the supervision of the department. Pasaporte continued, “A lot of the tools are much heavier and bulkier than I thought, and I guess the thing I realized most is that it’s a much harder job being a firefighter than I thought!”

Teacher Ryan Lambert has been a member of the Kamsack Volunteer Fire Department for thirteen years and currently serves as a Captain. He has also taught at GSSD for thirteen years and was the perfect candidate to offer this exciting new course. “Teaching Emergency Services is a great opportunity for me to take all my experiences and learning from my time in the department and be able to share some of that with the students in my class. I take a lot of joy in being able to educate my students in both a classroom and real-life setting. If this course sparks an interest for some students to continue their involvement with the Emergency Services sector and give back to the communities that they will eventually become part of, that’s even more rewarding for me,” Lambert explained.



ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- Fostering connections and supporting transitions
- Valuing input from students, families, staff, and the community
- Communicating openly and clearly
- Forming partnerships to support GSSD's priority areas

COLUMBIA SCHOOL HOLDS HALLOWEEN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NIGHT AND DANCE!

Columbia School fully embraced the Halloween spirit this year! On Thursday, October 26, the school hosted a Family Dance open to families with students from PreK/MELP up to Grade 4. The event was a huge success, with an impressive turnout of over 200 attendees! Families enjoyed dancing to lively music, capturing memorable moments in front of the Halloween backdrop, and indulging in treats and glow items available at the canteen run by the Student Leadership Council (SLC). It was an evening of pure, spooky fun for everyone!



On October 27, the Student Leadership Council (SLC) organized a dance event for students in grades 5 to 8. The event saw another fantastic turnout, and students had a blast participating in costume contests where prizes were awarded in various categories. The evening was filled with students requesting their favorite dance tracks, capturing memorable moments in front of our Halloween backdrop, and even some spontaneous dance competitions on the dance floor!



A CHRISTMAS TRADE SHOW FOR ALL AT COLUMBIA SCHOOL!

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, The second annual Christmas Trade Show, organized by the Student Leadership Committee (SLC) at Columbia School, was a tremendous success. This year's event featured over 35 vendors, and families had the delightful opportunity to take pictures with Santa and receive candy canes. The SLC hosts both the Christmas Trade Show and a Spring event to generate funds for the bi-annual Experiences Canada trips available to SLC members, specifically Grade 7 and 8 students. This initiative not only serves as an excellent fundraising opportunity but also fosters community engagement.



ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

HOLIDAY HARMONY AT DAVISON SCHOOL

On December 14, 2023, the Holiday Harmony event took center stage at Davison School, orchestrated under the guidance of Ms. Tytlandsvik. A festive celebration of Christmas, Snow, and Lights, this production showcased the talents of students across all grades. Engaging the students in the planning process, Ms. Tytlandsvik incorporated their ideas for song selection and costume design. Notably, a group of Grade 6 students served as the MCs for the evening.

The show commenced with a welcome video from the PreK students, followed by entertaining performances from each grade. Kindergarten embarked on a playful "Santa Hunt" and sang about the joys of "Playing in the Snow." Grade 1 counted down to Christmas in their rendition of "Christmas is Here," while Grade 2 sparkled with "Rocks for Christmas." Grade 3 shared their perspective on the "Elf on the Shelf," and Grade 5 captivated the audience with cup drumming to "Jingle Bells." Grade 6 showcased their percussion talents with a bucket drumming performance of "Nutcracker March." The grand finale featured Grade 4's poignant rendition of "Winter Lights," leaving many audience members moved to tears.

To conclude the evening, the School Community Council conducted a 50/50 draw, announcing the lucky winner from tickets sold before the concert. The event not only celebrated the holiday spirit but also demonstrated the collaborative and creative efforts of Davison School's talented students.



REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE AT CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL

On November 9, 2023, the Canora Composite School (CCS) Student Representative Council held their annual Remembrance Day Service, an event marked by the welcomed participation of Canora Junior Elementary School. This collaboration heightened the significance of the ceremony, emphasizing a collective commitment to honoring and remembering the sacrifices made by veterans.

Pictured below was the Colour Party (flag bearers) consisting of the Canora Air Cadets. L-R Maisie Kuzminski, Michayla Maygard, Zoe Becker, Horation Wayliw. CCS was captivated by Jack Craig, a Grade 12 student, who performed the Last Post and Rouse with his Euphonium.



*SRC Back Row L-R: Mr. Nielson, Ty Sleeva, Callie Sznerch, Bailee Zuravloff, Jack Craig, Mr. Baillie
Front Row: Ava Love, Jessee Kopelchuk, Makayla Heshka, Delilah Wilson, Jordan Harper, Shayna Leson*



ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

ESTERHAZY HIGH SCHOOL WARRIORS BRING HOME THE AAA PROVINCIAL VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP AND RECEIVE SHSAA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD



Sunday, November 26, 2023 was filled with excitement and anticipation as the Esterhazy High School (EHS) Boys Volleyball Team played for the gold medal in the AAA Provincial Volleyball Championship. The final game against Assiniboia was no easy match with a tight score of 25-11, 25-21 for EHS. The boys and coach Jarret Walker, used their team work and energetic crowd to secure the win! Assiniboia came in second and Valley Christian Academy won the bronze medal.

Congratulations boys!

Pictured left: The EHS Boys Volleyball Team celebrate with their gold medals!



Pictured right: EHS fans fill the stands with supportive and motivational signs to cheer on their team!

Congratulations!



In addition to their remarkable achievement, the EHS senior boys' volleyball team garnered further recognition by receiving the prestigious Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association (SHSAA) Sportsmanship Award. On December 12, 2023, the SHSAA, represented by Dave Sandomirsky, presented this prestigious award to the outstanding EHS senior boys' volleyball team.

The acknowledgment of sportsmanship not only highlights the team's athletic ability but also underscores their commitment to fair play, respect, and integrity on and off the court. The entire EHS community is filled with pride, celebrating the remarkable success of the senior boys' volleyball team and expressing gratitude to Mr. Walker for his invaluable guidance and leadership.

Pictured above and below: The EHS Sr Boys Volleyball Team are awarded their banner with Coach Walker and Dave Sandomirsky (SHSAA).

The team's dedication to excellence and sportsmanship has, undoubtedly, left a lasting and positive impact at EHS and the broader community.



A special thank you to Sask Milk for providing chocolate and white milk for every student at EHS that day.



ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

AN AFTERNOON OF GRANDMOTHER'S TEA AT KAMSACK COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTE IN COLLABORATION WITH VICTORIA SCHOOL

On November 16th, Kamsack Comprehensive Institute (KCI) and Victoria School hosted a grandmother's tea at KCI, bringing together matriarchs from Kamsack and nearby communities. Prior to the event, KCI and VIC staff, guided by GSSD's Cultural Advocate Robert Severight, gathered labrador tea leaves, providing a hands-on learning experience.

Pictured to the right and below: Staff from KCI and VIC join Robert Severight in gathering labrador tea leaves for the event.



Pictured below: KCI and VIC families, students and staff gather in the KCI gym with matriarchs from Kamsack and nearby communities.

The event featured bannock and labrador tea served by enthusiastic students, creating a relaxed atmosphere for intergenerational connections. Attendees appreciated the occasion, leading to multiple requests for it to become a recurring event. This tea not only celebrated cultural traditions but also ignited community engagement, fostering ongoing connections among students, staff, and community members.

A heartfelt expression of gratitude is extended to the numerous individuals whose collective efforts played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of this memorable afternoon.



ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

FULL HEARTS AND A FULL GYM AS MACDONALD HOLDS THEIR ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK!



On Friday, December 8, 2023, Macdonald held their annual potluck! In a small community, the potluck stands as an eagerly anticipated annual event that brings the community together. Macdonald school and its guests have grown in number, which meant requiring the borrowing of tables and chairs from the local communiplex hall this year, effectively "filling" the gymnasium.

The School Community Council took charge of organizing and preparing the main dishes, including turkey, ham, gravy, and potatoes. Parents and community members contributed home-cooked dishes, transforming the long meal tables into a spread of diverse foods.

Food preparation took place in the school kitchen, filling the halls with the enticing aromas of the Christmas meal. The Gr. 7/8/9 Band students, under the direction of a Grade 9 student, played three songs during the event.

The tradition followed a thoughtful sequence where guests and preschoolers are invited to eat first, followed by the school. Junior High Students team up with Kindergarten/Grade 1's and 2's, guiding them through the line and ensuring an efficient and enjoyable experience.

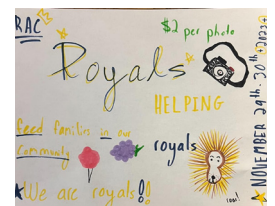
After the meal, many linger to engage in conversations, and with everyone's collective effort, the cleanup is efficiently executed. This heartwarming event fosters connections at a crucial time of the year, leaving a lasting impact on the community.



YORKDALE CENTRAL SCHOOL SPREADS HOLIDAY CHEER WITH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

In the spirit of giving, Yorkdale Central School (YCS) has been hard at work ensuring that every family enjoys a festive holiday season by raising funds for the purchase of gift cards from local grocery stores for YCS families in need. As part of their student-led conferences, the Royal Advocacy Club (RAC) offered photos with their mascot, Roary the Lion, for \$2. The festive spirit continued at Yorkdale's Christmas Concert, where the RAC conducted a silver collection, generating over \$1,500. A heartfelt thank you goes to an anonymous local business for their generous donation of \$1,500, and BG Denture Clinic for their generous donation of many gifts to be sent home with families over the holiday season.

Additionally, Yorkdale's Student Leadership Council (SLC) organized a successful Street Market, raising approximately \$1,500 to contribute towards a variety of causes such as the Stockings for Seniors program which spreads warmth and cheer to the elderly members of the community as well as donated a portion to the school's Breakfast program.



The Yorkdale Central School Staff, RAC, and SLC worked together to also provide a donation for one of Yorkdale's students who has had a recent diagnosis of Leukemia and will continue to receive many months of treatment in the new year.

Yorkdale Central School extends heartfelt wishes, aspiring for every family to enjoy the festive season!

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

- Enhancing mental health and well-being for students and staff
- Offering safe and inviting facilities
- Promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion



MILLER SCHOOL'S NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: A COMMUNITY TRIUMPH

In a remarkable community effort, Miller School led the installation of new playground equipment, thanks to the collaborative support of Sandbox Mutual Insurance, the City of Melville, and Terry Friesen Concrete. The School Community Council and Miller Principal Chad Lechner, worked tirelessly, securing grants, overseeing installation, and rallying local contributions, showcasing the power of unity.

Sandbox Mutual Insurance's \$25,000 grant and active involvement were crucial to the project's success, while the City of Melville contributed labor, machinery, and a \$5,000 grant. The Melville Vet Clinic's \$10,000 donation, Grain Millers \$3,000 donation, and the skid steers and labor from Terry Friesen Concrete and Petrichuk's Service Station further exemplified the community spirit.

As the new playground stands, it symbolizes not just a space for children but a testament to what a united community can achieve.

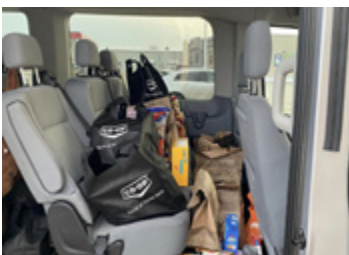


Pictured above: The work from start to finish! From laying the groundwork, to putting it all together. And finally- the students get to enjoy!

CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL SCARES AWAY HUNGER!

On October 26, 2023, the Student Representative Council (SRC) of Canora Composite School (CCS) gathered outside Gateway CO-OP with the aim of filling a van to support the annual CCS Scare Away Hunger campaign for the Filling the Gap Food Bank in Canora and its surrounding areas. The CCS SRC extends a heartfelt "Thank You" to the parents, students, and community members whose support led to the campaign's tremendous success, garnering over 500 items and \$1,200 in cash donations.

Special recognition is given to Aspen Paramedic Services and Kondratoff Persick LLP for their generous contributions. The grade 12 students took the initiative to deliver all food and donations to the Canora food bank.



Pictured above L-R: Mr. Nielsen, Mr. Baillie, Jordan Harper, Ty Sleeva, Shayna Leson, Ava Love, Makayla Heshka, Callie Sznerech, Sofia Tratch, The CCS Cougar

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

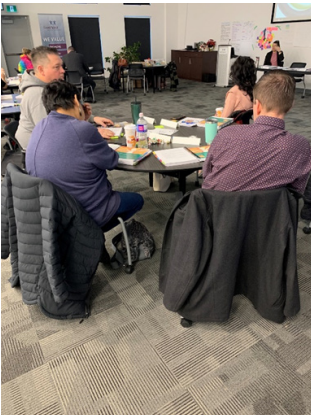
GSSD HOSTS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FIRST NATIONS TRAINING



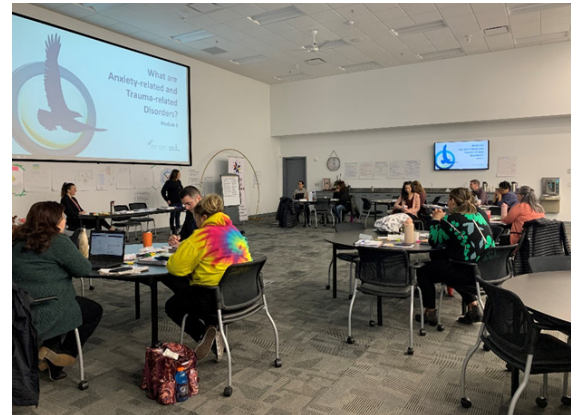
The Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) hosted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) First Nations training in the first week of December. This training is designed to encourage a spark that awakens the courage to have open and honest conversations about mental health with family, friends, and others.

The training is part of a larger journey of GSSD in its work toward reconciliation and its commitment to the vision and goals of the Inspiring Success: First Nations and Metis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework.

The MHFA First Nations course was offered to provide an opportunity for participants and others who work with Indigenous students to learn and have serious conversations about mental health and wellness.



Participants reflect on their life experiences, acknowledge the historical context of the colonization of Canada and move forward to explore and co-construct ways to restore balance on a journey to mental health and wellness.



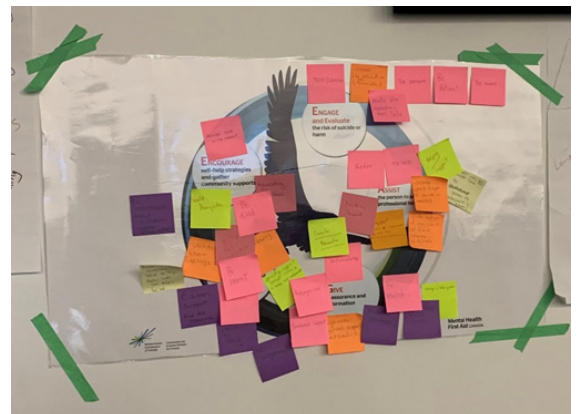
The MHFA First Nations training implements the EAGLE Model in its training components. The 5 basic actions of **EAGLE** are:

- E**ngage and Evaluate the risk of suicide or harm
- A**ssist the person to seek professional help
- G**ive reassurance and information
- L**isten without judgment
- E**ncourage self-help strategies and gather community supports

EAGLE is the framework for having a confident conversation about mental health with family, friends, colleagues, and strangers

Key outcomes of the training are:

- Increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms of the most common mental health problems
- Increasing awareness of the pathways to recovery
- Increasing confidence and skills to help those developing a mental health problem or in crisis



HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

GSSD ROUND DANCE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

ROUND DANCE FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

HOSTED BY THE GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION



Visit GSSD.ca to learn more about Round Dances and frequently asked questions!

Saturday, December 16, 2023
5:00pm Feast, 7:00pm Round Dance
Yorkton Regional High School Gym
150 Gladstone Ave N
Yorkton SK S3N 2A8

MC - Howie Thompson
Stickman - Aaron Tootoosis
Smudgeman - Glen Pelletier

First 20 lead singers will be paid.
GSSD Round Dance Committee Giveaway.
Bagged lunch will be served.

Event is open to all!
All students, staff, and the wider
community are welcome to attend!

GSSD is not responsible for loss, theft or injury. This is an alcohol
and drug free event. Security will be on site.

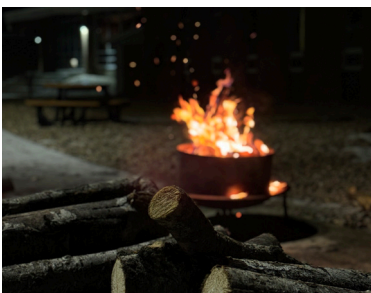
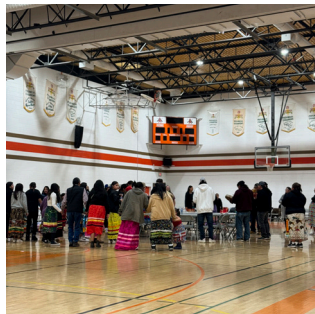
For more information please call the Good Spirit School Division at
(306) 786-5500, email info@gssd.ca or visit www.gssd.ca.

On Saturday, December 16, 2023, the inaugural Round Dance for Truth and Reconciliation, hosted by the Good Spirit School Division, unfolded at Yorkton Regional High School. The evening commenced with a feast at 5:00 pm, leading into the Round Dance, which commenced at 7:00 pm.

GSSD would like to thank MC Howie Thompson, Stickman Aaron Tootoosis, and Smudgeman Glen Pelletier for guiding everyone through the evening. Special thanks to the diligent fire watch team, ensuring the careful supervision of the fire used to heat the drums.

In the captured moments below, you'll find Director of Education/CEO Quintin Robertson, Cultural Advocate Robert Severight, and Indigenous Student Success Lead Erin Nicolas. The images below also portray the fire utilized in the drum-heating process and the Round Dance in motion. On the right we have the giveaway items distributed by the GSSD Committee to attendees.

This significant event was made possible through the dedication of the GSSD Indigenous Education Team and more, including Erin Nicolas, Robert Severight, Quintin Robertson, Keith Gervais, Jesse Armstrong, Alan Kyle and Brandon Needham, whose tireless efforts shaped the success of the occasion. Through events like the Round Dance GSSD is actioning commitment to Reconciliation as we continue to learn about Indigenous people, perspectives and culture.



HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

**MEET A BUS DRIVER: MICHAEL HALYK**

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 school days, ensure the safety of students who ride the bus, and build connections with parents and administration at each school.

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, the transportation team will be highlighting drivers from across the Division.

Meet Michael Halyk!

How long have you been a bus driver?

I have been an employee of GSSD since April of 2022, however, I am not new to bus driving as I drove 50+ years ago prior to when school boards owned their own buses. I drove in the Melville area near where we farmed.

What inspired you to be a bus driver?

I enjoy the children and driving in general. On the farm we drove everything imaginable, so driving has never been an issue. I knew prior to retiring from a career at Key Auto Group that I was interested in pursuing bus driving opportunities.

What other interests do you have?

I love fixing and restoring things, especially older items. Antiques would be my hobby! I also enjoy boating and fishing.

Do you have a pet?

My wife and I have a cat.

What adventures over the course of your career have you found particularly satisfying?

I have been involved in agriculture policy work through many different facets and I found it very enjoyable and rewarding.

If you could invite anyone on your bus, who would it be and why?

I would invite any or all the parents. This would give the parents assurances that their children are getting a safe enjoyable ride to and from school.

What is your favorite travel destination?

I would say my favorite places to travel would be anywhere throughout Canada. We are a very diverse country with so many things to see.



*Middle photo: Michael's Project before restoration.
Bottom photo: Michael's Project after restoration!*

Would you recommend being a bus driver?

Absolutely, I think it's perfect for retirees or anyone in general.

EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Upholding clear, high-quality Board of Education Policies
- Maintaining transparent, high-quality administrative procedures aligned with Board policy
- Focusing on educational approaches that prioritize student success
- Allocating resources to improve experiences for students, staff, and the community



GSSD BOARD MEMBER LOIS SMANDYCH RECEIVES THE AWARD OF DISTINCTION FROM THE SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

On Monday, November 13, 2023, at the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's (SSBA) Annual General Meeting, Lois Smandych, a distinguished member of the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) Board of Education, was awarded the prestigious Award of Distinction. This award, instituted in 2003, is a testament to Smandych's outstanding service and substantial contributions to the enhancement of education. The award recognizes the remarkable efforts of current or former board of education members who have made significant impacts on local and/or provincial levels.

Lois Elaine Smandych's journey in the field of education spans over two decades, marked by dedication and exemplary service. Serving in various capacities, including Vice Chair, Chair, and Trustee for Subdivision No. 5 covering Saltcoats, Bredenbury, Churchbridge, and Langenburg, Lois has consistently championed GSSD's motto: "Students Come First."

Before her tenure as a trustee, Lois's diverse background as a librarian at the Parkland Regional Library laid a solid foundation for her educational journey. Her two-decade-long experience in the library sector cultivated an understanding of the transformative power of education and the importance of access to knowledge.

Lois's commitment to community service extends beyond her role as a trustee. She served as a Councilor and Mayor for the Town of Bredenbury, contributing significantly to various organizations such as the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA), palliative care initiatives, Church Leadership, and Big Brothers Big Sisters in Yorkton. Her leadership skills and ability to make a difference in people's lives are evident through her extensive involvement in diverse organizations.

Since her election in 2000, Lois has played a pivotal role in the GSSD Board of Education's growth and improvement. Her involvement in the SSBA has been instrumental in shaping educational policies and advocating for the best interests of students across the province. Serving as the Southern Constituency Representative and contributing to important committees affirms her commitment to lifelong learning and the development of educational resources.

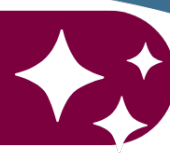
Amidst significant changes within the school division, including three amalgamations and an evolving focus on policy and governance, Lois has been at the forefront of navigating these transitions. Her dedication to keeping board policies current and relevant ensures that GSSD remains adaptive and responsive to the needs of its students and communities.

Lois Smandych's contributions and meaningful experiences embody the essence of a dedicated Board of Education Member. Her advocacy for accountability, integrity, and tireless commitment to the well-being of students, parents, and staff will undoubtedly leave a lasting legacy in the Good Spirit School Division. As a beacon of consistency, communication, and advocacy, Lois Smandych exemplifies the qualities that define an exceptional Board Member.



Pictured above: Lois receives her award from SSBA President Jaimie Smith-Windsor

FOCUSING IN ON...



TRANSFERRING-LIFTING-REPOSITIONING (TLR) TRAINING COURSE

A Transferring-Lifting-Repositioning (TLR) training course was offered as a professional development session for GSSD support staff on November 10, 2023. Certified trainers, Maureen Blight, GSSD Occupational Therapist and Stacy Rubletz, Student Support Teacher for Norquay School, instructed the group in proper transferring, lifting and repositioning techniques.

The training followed the guidelines of the TLR Training Program through the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health (SASWH). The course consisted of *Object Moving and Client Moving* sections with applied practice. Transferring and lifting procedures and guidelines in Good Spirit School Division were referenced in the training.

There were nine participants from five schools involved in the training. The course was well received, and the trainers were pleased with the level of participation and dedication to proper form, as well as the enthusiasm of the participants. This professional development and training course aims to enhance the support provided to GSSD students, ensuring the provision of safe opportunities and effective engagement for all.

Thank you to the Student Services Consultants for organizing the training date and to the Yorkton Regional High School for providing the space and equipment for the training.



Pictured: Certified trainers, Maureen Blight and Stacy Rubletz educate and demonstrate for GSSD staff as to proper object and client moving techniques and methods.

Did you know...

- In GSSD, at any point in time, there are on average 16-20 students with significant mobility challenges who benefit from having staff helpers with specific TLR Training.
- GSSD has three TLR trainers on staff – Stacy Rubletz, Tammy Fleury, and Maureen Blight, all of whom became trainers through SASWH in November 2019, and who recertified as trainers in 2022.

- To date, a minimum of 35 staff have had the opportunity to attend the certified training courses to further develop their knowledge and practical application of transferring and lifting principles with the students they work with at the schools and their handling of related equipment and materials.

Our Motto Students Come First
Our Mission Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures
Our Values Learning Without Limits, Achievement For All
Our Vision Belonging, Diversity, Learning, Perseverance & Responsibility