

# IN FOCUS

WITH THE GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION



MAY/JUNE 2024

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Wow - it's the end of the 2023-2024 school year! As we reflect on this year, I want to extend congratulations to all students, staff, and families who have made this year truly remarkable. Your hard work, dedication, and perseverance have been inspiring.

To all our students, thank you for your enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment to learning. Your energy and passion make our schools vibrant places of growth and discovery. We are so proud of your achievements and look forward to seeing what you accomplish next.

A special congratulations to our Grade 12 graduates. Your journey has been filled with challenges and triumphs, and you have shown incredible resilience and determination. We are so proud of each and every one of you and look forward to seeing the bright futures you will create.

To our retirees, thank you for your years of service and commitment to education. Your contributions have made a lasting impact on our school division, and you will be greatly missed. We wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement.

To all our staff, thank you for another year of learning, growing, and achieving. Your dedication to our students and to each other is the foundation of our success. We celebrate YOU and all that you do to make our school division exceptional.

I hope everyone has a wonderful and safe summer, filled with relaxation and joy. We cannot wait to see everyone back at school on September 2, 2024, ready for another exciting year of learning and growth.

**Quintin M. Robertson**  
Director of Education/CEO



*Pictured above: Quintin races to the finish line against Miller students. Rumour has it...he was not victorious!*

## HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY



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### FOCUSING IN ON

## Land-Based Learning



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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) is vital to GSSD’s commitment to high-quality teaching and learning. It supports improving student outcomes, implementing the “Inspiring Success” Policy, developing leaders, ensuring consistent practices, and providing top-notch resources. As the school year ends, GSSD employees remained engaged in numerous PD sessions throughout May and June, making these months both busy and fulfilling.

PD Event	Date	Topic/Outcome
Division Wide Professional Development Day	May 21, 2024	GSTA and CUPE members started their day with keynote speaker Dr. Phil McRae speaking on Artificial Intelligence. The afternoon was spent at their GSTA and CUPE Annual General Meetings.
Blended Learning PD - Day 2	May 23, 2024	GSSD hosted Day 2 of the Blended Learning Professional Learning Community, focusing on practical applications of blended learning. Digital Learning Consultants Michelle Morley and Shawn Kostiuik guided teachers in using technology to enhance student engagement and lesson design.
Grade 9 ELA Writing Engagement	May 28, 2024	The Grade 9 ELA Writing Engagement Professional Development event featured dynamic discussions, innovative strategies for boosting student engagement, and workshops on essential writing practices and culturally inclusive teaching, leaving teachers inspired and equipped with new ideas.
Administrator Meeting	June 4, 2024	The last in-person administrator meeting began with diving into GSSD’s newly developed “Responding to Racism/Harassment” Admin. Procedure. The day concluded with updates from each department.

## GRADE 9 ELA WRITING ENGAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Grade 9 ELA Writing Engagement Professional Development event was a success, marked by enthusiastic participation and dynamic discussions among teachers. The day focused on sharing ideas and exploring innovative ways to boost student engagement in writing.

Highlights included a session on curriculum mining, where participants analyzed curriculum components, and a workshop by Patricia Ives and Tricia Reed on essential writing practices in the classroom. The afternoon sessions covered culturally inclusive and affirming practices, their importance in teaching and assessment, and practical applications of these concepts.

Teachers also had dedicated planning time to reflect on their commitments and strategies for the upcoming semester. The event concluded with setting clear writing expectations and a wrap-up session to consolidate the day's learning.

Overall, the day was highly productive and inspiring, leaving teachers with new ideas and a renewed commitment to enhancing student engagement in writing.



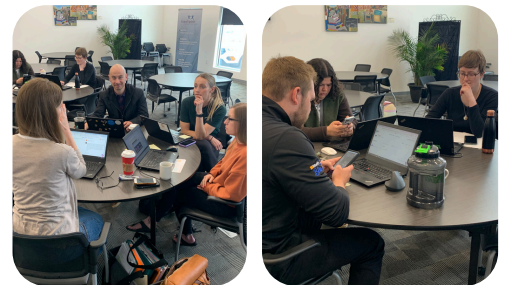
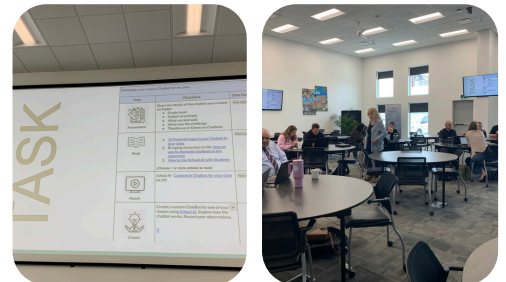
## BLENDDED LEARNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - DAY 2!

Read about Day 1 - Here! [2024\\_03\\_01 In Focus Report](#) (page 5)

On May 23rd, Good Spirit School Division hosted Day 2 of the Blended Learning Professional Learning Community (PLC). The theme for Day 2 was, “Blended Learning – Keeping it Practical.” Blended Learning is the combination of active engaged learning online with active engaged learning offline that provides students with more control over the time, place, pace, and path of their learning (Tucker). Given GSSD’s commitment of 1:1 Chromebooks in grades 4-12 and 3:1 iPads in K-3, GSSD is uniquely positioned to add Blended Learning practices that allow teachers and students to purposefully engage current and new technologies.

Digital Learning Consultants Michelle Morley and Shawn Kostiuik designed this day around practical tools that teachers and students can use at any stage of the learning process. The PLC Group also looked at designing a new lesson or refining a traditional lesson so that it fit the definition of Blended Learning. Several tools were used and there was heavy emphasis on the use of artificial intelligence in this planning stage. The day ended with participants continuing the work in their classrooms with assistance or follow up from either Michelle or Shawn.

In 2024-2025, the Blended Learning PLC Group will be expanded as GSSD continues to unpack these teaching and learning strategies to more teachers.



## NORQUAY SCHOOL'S PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM: A FULL-DAY ADVENTURE IN EARLY EDUCATION



Norquay School is proud to offer a Prekindergarten program, designed specifically for children aged 3-4 years old. PreK typically runs half-day programs, however, Norquay has full-day sessions every other day, a first in within the Good Spirit School Division. Starting with four students at the beginning of the year, the PreK program grew to eleven by January and is expected to accommodate around fourteen students next year.

A typical day in the PreK classroom begins with a soft start, featuring calming music, puzzles, coloring, and socializing. Physical Education follows, where children engage in activities to develop fundamental motor skills. The program features an outdoor space that is equipped with gross motor play materials and provides further opportunities for exploration and play.

After morning recess, students return to the classroom for snack time, where healthy eating habits are promoted through group discussions.

The morning continues with carpet sessions filled with a variety of activities: singing, practicing the alphabet and counting, exploring the letter of the week, answering daily questions, and enjoying story time. Crafts related to the story or weekly letter activities follow, after which children engage in 45 minutes to an hour of free play and exploration, fostering imagination and creativity.

Post-lunch activities include calming time with puzzles and relaxing music, group stretches, and more classroom exploration. Fine motor activities and free play fill the remaining time until afternoon recess. After returning indoors, students enjoy their last snack, pack their bags, gather on the carpet for a final story time, and reflect on the day's events. The school day concludes with outdoor exploration in nature, where children explore the PreK park, nearby playgrounds, or the school field.



A wonderful part of the PreK program is family engagement. Parents/guardians receive regular updates via Seesaw, including photos and progress reports. They are encouraged to join monthly family engagement activities. A few favourites from this year include having caregivers join us in the classroom to trace their child and write inside the outline why they love them. Making photo placemats that were laminated and used by the students during snack time, creating love bugs, going to the local hill to toboggan, as well as visiting the local volunteer Fire Station.



Norquay School is pleased to provide this opportunity to impact children's lives positively through early education. With its innovative approach and commitment to child development, Norquay School's PreK program promises to be a cornerstone of early childhood education for years to come.

## PJ GILLEN HOSTS THE 2024 WILLOW AWARDS!

The Good Spirit School Division is proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements and involvement of our students and staff in the prestigious Willow Awards, held this year at PJ Gillen School (PJG) in Esterhazy. This event has demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication, making it a memorable and enriching experience for everyone involved.

### Willow Awards Theme and Symbolism

Inspired by the symbolism of willow trees, PJ Gillen's Willow Awards initiative highlighted themes of flexibility and adaptability. Just as willow sprouts can easily grow into new trees, each book read by students represents a new tree of learning and growth. This concept was beautifully illustrated through PJG's "Willow Sprouts Wall," where students' names were displayed under the Willow Nominated books they read, symbolizing their academic and personal growth.

### Initial Submission Success

PJG's journey began with a compelling submission that won both the Launch (where you could win all 30 nominated books) and the SaskEnergy Willow Awards Gala (where you'd host the awards and also get all 30 nominated books for the next year). PJG's win was made possible by the enthusiastic participation of high school students from Esterhazy High School, who engaged with the Snow level reads. Their involvement and the support from their teachers were invaluable.

### Voting and Reading Initiatives

In March, PJ Gillen School set up polling stations in the library, allowing students to vote for their favorite nominated books. The process was designed to mimic a government polling station, teaching students about the democratic process. Several teachers read the nominated books to their classes, and the library staff read all the Shining category books with each class, discussing how each book helped them "branch out" and connect to real-world themes.



*Pictured above: Students reading Canadian author's nominated books.*

*Photo credits: World Spectator*



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**PJ GILLEN HOSTS THE 2024 WILLOW AWARDS!...CONTINUED**

**Gala Planning and Willow Wednesdays**

Every Wednesday, PJ Gillen School hosted "Willow Wednesdays," where students from grades 3-5 created artwork based on the Willow books to display at the gala. This initiative brought together students from various social and age groups, fostering teamwork and connections through a shared love of reading. Additionally, each class created bulletin boards featuring their projects on the Willow books, transforming the school into a reading wonderland. Special mention goes to Josey Rink's grade 5 class, who made a giant paper mache tree out of old book pages and decorated the gym with greenery.

**Gala Day Highlights**

The gala day featured a school-wide virtual author visit with Sid Sharpe, author of the Shining Category winner "The Wolf Suit." Lorna Schultz Nicholson, winner of the Diamond Category for her book "Taking the Ice," visited in person, captivating students with her interactive sessions. The event also included student performances, such as a treaty acknowledgment by grade 1 students, a song in Cree by grade 3 students, and an interpretive dance by grade 4 students. The Willow Awards Board was deeply impressed with the school's efforts and the sense of community and teamwork displayed.

**Continued Excitement and Future Involvement**

The excitement from the gala continues to buzz among students, who are already eager to read next year's nominees. This year's involvement in the Willow Awards has shown students the vast world of literature and how they can be part of it in meaningful ways. Special thanks to PJG Principal Kelsey Shields and Vice Principal Wanita Lippai for their incredible support throughout this adventure.

The Good Spirit School Division is thrilled to announce that library tech, Suzannah Duff, has been invited to join the Willow Awards Board, marking another proud achievement in our ongoing commitment to fostering a love of reading and learning in our schools.



*Pictured left: Paper mache tree created by Josey Rink's Grade 5 class.*



*Pictured above: Author Lorna Shultz Nicholson accepting the Diamon Award from Nicole, Callie and Kenzie.*

*Photo credits: World Spectator*



*Pictured above: PJG students light up the stage for Gala performances!*

*Photo credits: World Spectator*

## INVERMAY STUDENT ATTENDS SPARCS (SEEING POSSIBILITIES AND REWARDS IN COMPUTER SCIENCE) WORKSHOP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Cassandra Ponte, a Grade 10 student at Invermay School, had the amazing opportunity to attend the SPARCS workshop at the University of Waterloo from May 12-18.



Out of over 300 applications, Cassandra was one of the 40 that got accepted. The participants were from all across Canada, and Cassandra was the only participant chosen from Saskatchewan. Cassandra would like to thank the Good Spirit School Division, Invermay School, Invermay School Community Council, Wadena Coop, and friends and family members for their donations to be able to attend.

From Monday-Friday, participants spent about six hours in lectures and labs each day. All of the lectures and labs were taught by professionals who had either their master's or PhD and worked for the University. Every evening was a variety of different team building activities to get to know everyone.

The most memorable activity from the week was on Thursday, studying algorithms. The group learned that an algorithm is a finite set of step-by-step instructions to accomplish a task.

Cassandra made many new friends and bonded over lectures, schools, personal lives, and interests. Though the week initially felt long due to the intense learning, no one wanted to leave by the end. Cassandra will always cherish the friendships and experiences from these five days at SPARCS.

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### Monday:

- Introduction to programming, artificial intelligence (AI), privacy & security, and digital hardware.

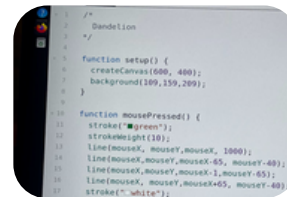
*Pictured right: Digital Hardware Circuit and sign making!*



### Tuesday:

- Programming using “OpenProcessing” to experiment with different codes.
- Lecture on computer graphics.
- Traveled to Stratford to watch “Twelfth Night.”

*Pictured right: Creating code to make a dandelion and a visit to the Stratford to watch Shakespeare!*



### Wednesday:

- Digital hardware and a lecture on the history of computer science.
- Finite state machine lecture followed by a lab.
- Visited the observatory on campus and attended a short lecture on our solar system.
- Viewed the moon through a telescope, seeing its craters clearly.

**“All the craters on the moon were very clearly visible through the telescope and it was one of the coolest things I’ve ever witnessed.”**



### Thursday:

- Digital hardware and a meet-and-greet with four students nearing the completion of their masters.
- Talent show in the evening.

### Friday:

- Digital hardware and learned how to add and subtract binary numbers.

*Pictured right: A group photo of all participants at the final banquet!*





## 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

### RED DRESS PIN CREATION WITH GSSD INDIGENOUS EDUCATION TEAM

On Sunday, May 5th, communities across the nation paused to acknowledge the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, 2-Spirited and Gender-Diverse People, a critical time to remember the lives lost and amplify calls for justice and awareness.

On April 19th and 26th, Columbia School's Indigenous Community Worker (ICW), Tashena Asham, teamed up with ICW Melissa Fleury from Dr. Brass, and brought together community members from both schools. They hosted beading evenings dedicated to crafting red dress pins, a symbol of remembrance and advocacy.

The beading events were not just an act of creation but also of communal solidarity, education, and remembrance.

These pins are more than just pieces of art, they are a powerful reminder of the sisters, mothers, and friends who have been taken from us. Wearing them is a way to keep their memory alive and push for change.



### CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL PLANTS THEIR 2024 GARDEN



On June 16th, Canora Composite School (CCS) students planted the 2024 garden. Despite the delay due to wet weather, CCS managed to get the garden planted. Each class took part and was responsible for a section. Here, the Grade 8A students are planting potatoes.

A big thank you to Cora at Canora Greenhouse and Kevin at Young's Plant World for donating seeds and vegetable plants for the 2024 CCS garden!

## THINK HEALTH, MAY 8, 2024

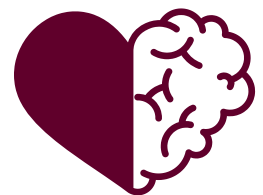
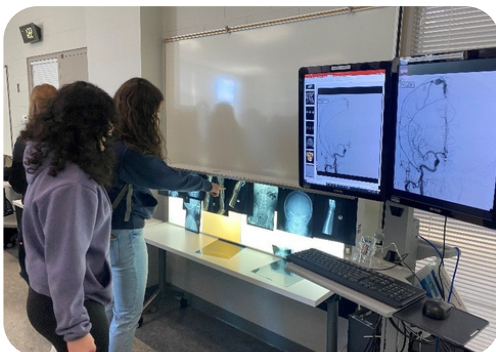
Good Spirit School Division, in partnership with RDIEC, hosted the final THINK Event of the 2023-24 school year, THINK Health, on May 8. The event, held at the Suncrest College Trades and Technology Centre, attracted 89 students from ten high schools. Sponsored by Suncrest College, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) College of Nursing, and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), it aimed to highlight various healthcare careers, especially as many current professionals near retirement.

Students were introduced to admission details for institutions like the U of S and Suncrest College. Jenna Niebergall, Public Relations and Marketing Manager at Suncrest College, guided them on where to find application information. Local pharmacist Brad Surjik shared his journey into pharmacy. Mr. Surjik shared that he was uncertain about his future after high school. Following his parents' and teachers' advice, he kept his options open by taking all the math and science courses available in grades 11 and 12. Mr. Surjik also emphasized the expanding role of pharmacists, including administering vaccines.

During lunch, students participated in "Career Cruising," networking with health professionals while enjoying pizza. The SHA did a masterful job and organized afternoon sessions, dividing students into groups for hands-on presentations in Nursing, Therapies, Medical Lab Sciences, Emergency Services, and Diagnostics. Students were able to take part in four out of the five sessions offered.

THINK Health concluded a series of career pathway events for the year, following THINK Agriculture and THINK Trades. Plans for 2024-25 include THINK Business in October, focusing on careers in Accounting, Marketing, HR, and Finance, and THINK Law Enforcement in February, featuring careers like RCMP Officer, Lawyer, and Judge.

Thank you to all of the Grad Coaches, Administrators and parents/guardians that took the time to make this event a priority for their students.



## NEW MURAL IN THE MELVILLE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL STUDENT CENTER, CREATED BY THE VISUAL ART 30 CLASS



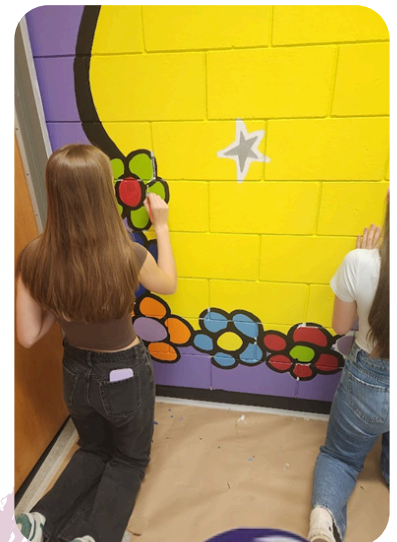
*Pictured above: Visual Art 30 class in front of their new Kevin Pepace mural in the MCS Student Center.*

The mural is in keeping with Pepace's distinctive art style and emphasizes the significance of aspiring to greatness for all students by reaching for the stars. The mural features vibrant colours symbolizing the joy of life, intricate floral motifs reflecting Indigenous beadwork, and bold black outlines. Ten dedicated Visual Art 30 students created the mural as part of their Visual Art 30 coursework, using the project to forge connections beyond the classroom and deepen their understanding that we are all treaty people.

This collaborative artwork is a testament to the power of art in building relationships and enriching cultural awareness. Excitingly, two additional murals are planned to further enhance the Student Center's space at MCS.

The Visual Art 30 class at Melville Comprehensive School (MCS) recently collaborated with Ms. Leann, the school's Indigenous Community Worker, to create a striking mural in the MCS Student Center. Led by Visual Art 30 teacher, Sharon Roach, students created a mural inspired by the renowned Saskatchewan Indigenous artist, Kevin Pepace.

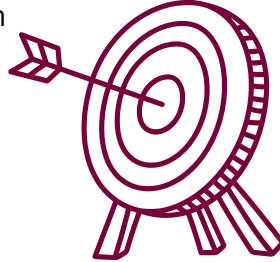
Kevin Pepace, hailing from Kelvington, Saskatchewan, and a member of the Yellowquill First Nations and Peter Chapman First Nation, generously permitted the use of one of his colouring pages as the mural's foundation.



## CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL FINDS SUCCESS AT PROVINCIALS/NATIONALS ARCHERY EVENT!

On May 24, 2024, Canora Composite School's (CCS) National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) team and coach Mr. Lowes travelled to Moose Jaw to take part in Provincials/Nationals. Congratulations to the archers on a great shoot and for representing CCS with pride! The National results are as follows:

- High School Team - Bronze
- Middle Team - Bronze
- Elementary Team - Silver
- Natalie Kosar - National Champion (highest score of the weekend)
- Jacob Lowes - High School Boys - 6th
- Jack Craig - High School Boys - 9th
- Roman Zaika - Elementary Boys - 3rd (Bronze)
- Lucas Woicichowski - Elementary Boys - 4th
- Connor Pozniak - Elementary Boys - 9th
- Odin Fullawka - Elementary Boys - 10th



*Pictured above: CCS graduating archers.*



### NASP Provincial Results

High School Team Gold  
 Middle Team Gold  
 Elementary Team Gold

**Natalie Kosar shot the highest score and is our Girls Senior Provincial Champion!!**

Jacob Lowes #2 Senior Boys  
 Jack Craig #3 Senior Boys  
 Joshua Prychak #5 Senior Boys  
 Andrew Sliva #6 Senior Boys  
 Porter Wolkowski #9 Senior Boys  
 Bailee Zuravloff #6 Senior Girls  
 Brandyn Woicichowski #2 Middle Boys  
 Levi Lowes #8 Middle Boys  
 Kolton Unick #9 Middle Boys  
 Mickayla Maygard #4 Middle Girls  
 Rori Love #7 Middle Girls  
 Maddy Dutchak #10 Middle Girls

Roman Zaika #2 Elementary Boys  
 Lucas Woicichowski #3 Elementary Boys  
 Connor Pozniak #5 Elementary Boys  
 Odin Fullawka #6 Elementary Boys  
 Coy Kraynick #7 Elementary Boys  
 Owen Jones #8 Elementary Boys  
 Echo Stevens #4 Elementary Girls  
 Talia Collingridge #5 Elementary Girls  
 Cora Tomcala #6 Elementary Girls  
 Hannah Dutchak #7 Elementary Girls  
 Riley Roberts #10 Elementary Girls

## CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AT CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL



On June 18th, Canora Composite School's Grade 5-7 students had the pleasure of welcoming Jesse Kitchemonia and Michael Keshane for an enriching cultural experience. Jesse demonstrated the technique and steps involved in tanning leather, while Michael introduced the students to the practice of smudging.



The workshops provided a hands-on learning opportunity, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of these traditional practices. The Grade 5A and 5B classes are pictured, fully engaged in these valuable lessons.

This event was a wonderful opportunity for students to connect with cultural heritage and learn new skills in a supportive environment.

## SHSAA PROVINCIAL TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS: GSSD MEDALISTS

The Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association (SHSAA) Provincial Track & Field Championships were held at the Gordie Howe Track & Field Complex in Saskatoon on June 7-8, 2024. This exciting event featured a variety of track heats, including hurdles, sprints, middle-distance, and long-distance races. The field events included discus, javelin, shot put, long jump, triple jump, high jump, and pole vault.

Below are the outstanding athletes from the Good Spirit School Division who brought home medals:

- 100 Meter Wheelchair Gold- Aiva Delaney, Melville Comprehensive School
- 400 Meter Wheelchair Gold- Aiva Delaney, Melville Comprehensive School
- Junior Boys 1500 Meter Bronze- Eddie Baron, Yorkton Regional High School (YRHS)
- Intermediate 400 Meter Bronze- Charlie Szabo, YRHS
- Junior Boys 3000 Meter Bronze- Eddie Baron, YRHS
- Junior Boys 200 Meter Silver- Amer Thomas, YRHS
- Senior Boys Long Jump Bronze- Colby Halliday, YRHS
- Junior Girls High Jump Bronze- Summer Johnson, Norquay School
- Intermediate Girls Javelin Silver- Amber Spray, Preeceville School
- Junior Girls Tetrathlon Bronze- Piper Beatty, YRHS
- Senior Boys Tetrathlon Bronze- Taye Shukin, Canora Composite School



**DR. BRASS PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY PRESENTS “SHOWSTOPPERS”**

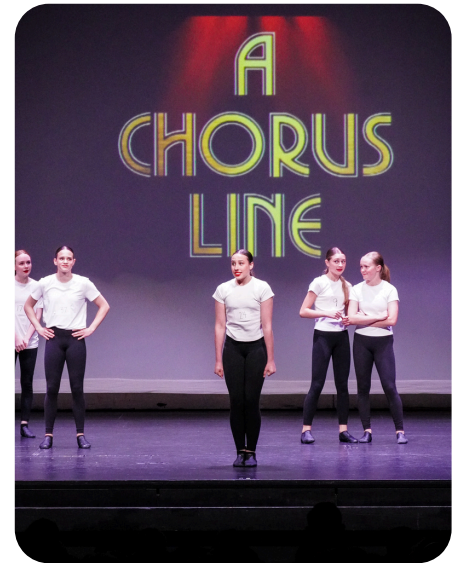


On Tuesday, June 4, the Dr. Brass Performing Arts Academy performed their show “Showstoppers” to a very engaged audience. The show followed a group of students who are in a state of concern after discovering that their Performing Arts Theatre Club is being cut from their school’s curriculum. They reminisce about their memories of musicals that they have performed in the past then consider the opportunity to save the club if they raise money. What better way to raise money than to put on a show? Through energetic dance numbers, educational scenes that tackle the changes of Musical Theatre through history, and captivating performances, the Performing Arts Academy educated and entertained the audience. CTV was there to capture the rehearsal process and aired a touching story about the academy.

On June 5th, the performance was repeated for students from Yorkdale Central School, MacDonald School, Canora Composite, KCI, MC Knoll, and Dr. Brass. Students clapped and cheered as they enjoyed the performance. Students learned, students laughed, and students left humming some notes, and dancing in their seats on their way back to class.

While packing up the theatre after the school show, the group couldn’t help but reminisce about their own journey as an academy. After 4 years, they will have their first Grade 8 graduates who have all expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to learn within the arts.

Showstoppers was choreographed by Tammy Kostersky alongside acting coach Carrie Pengilly.



## YORKDALE CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDS RECONCILIATION GARDEN

Yorkdale Central School (YCS) recognizes that the lasting effects of colonization and residential schools have made it harder for some students to stay engaged with their education. Students may feel disconnected from the school system and struggle to find their place. YCS is dedicated to helping these students by creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every student feels valued and encouraged in their learning journey. Embracing the motto of "Students Come First" at the Good Spirit School Division, it is imperative for us to prioritize Truth and Reconciliation in our educational institution. This journey is one that we must embark on collectively, irrespective of our backgrounds, with the aim of learning from one another and fostering mutual cultural appreciation.



YCS has numerous families deeply rooted in agriculture. Many of these families derive their livelihoods from farming, farm life, and the agricultural sector. Additionally, close to 15% of YCS's student population self-identifies as Indigenous. In order to guide YCS school towards the path of Truth and Reconciliation, they recognize the need to establish inclusive spaces within the premises where both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous families can feel a sense of connection, safety, and knowledge exchange.



In light of these considerations, the concept of a Reconciliation Garden was conceived. The Reconciliation Garden serves as a platform to initiate dialogues and learning experiences from diverse perspectives, aiming for all students to find elements of their identity reflected within this space. Furthermore, YCS strives to engage community members and Knowledge Keepers in the gardens to share wisdom and foster closer ties between the school and the local community.



The Reconciliation Garden features two semi-circle planter boxes with benches, where grade 3 students had the privilege of welcoming Kici Anishinabek Robert Flores. Robert shared his profound understanding of the land with the students, emphasizing the significance of showing gratitude and respect towards the land and its offerings. Together, they planted raspberries and Saskatoon berries, both indigenous to the region.

Within the garden are three additional planter boxes, where grade 3 students collaborated with local agrolgist Thom Weir during the spring. Thom imparted his extensive knowledge on the diverse crops that thrive in our local prairies.

A prominent feature within the garden is the teaching wall, which provides information on the four sacred medicines – Tobacco, Sweet Grass, Cedar, and Sage – along with details on various crops cultivated in Saskatchewan. The teaching boards are adorned with original commissioned artworks by Saskatoon-based artists, Amber Antymniuk and Vanessa Hyggen.

As YCS celebrates the completion of the garden and its inaugural planting season, the Yorkdale Central School Reconciliation Garden aims to serve as a hub for community unity, knowledge sharing, and mutual understanding for years to come.

Yorkdale is grateful to the sponsors who made this initiative possible: The Good Spirit School Division, The Painted Hand Community Development Corporation, Legacy Co-op, Richardson, and SynergyAG.



## 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



### YORKTON SCHOOLS RECEIVE GENEROUS DONATION TO NUTRITION PROGRAMS THROUGH LOCAL BALLROOM BLITZ EVENT!

On Saturday, March 16th, Yorkton, SK, hosted the exciting Ballroom Blitz at the Gallagher Centre. The event featured local Yorkton 'stars' paired with dance instructors, performing for a sold-out audience at the Gallagher Centre Flexihall.

Seven couples danced their hearts out, all in the name of charity. Among the performers were Tribal Chief Isabel O'Soup from the Yorkton Tribal Council, Chief Connie Big Eagle from Ocean Man First Nation, and Mick Parmar from the Good Spirit School Division. This dynamic trio supported the GSSD Foundation and Food Security Programs.

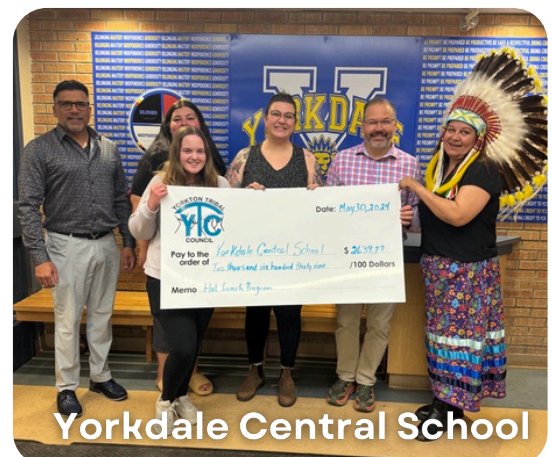
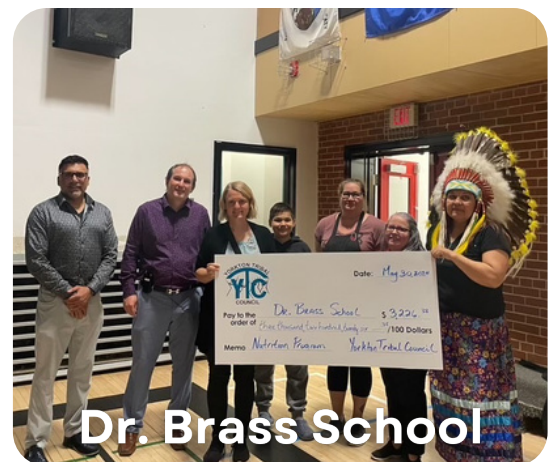
While they tied for third place, the most important achievement was the money raised for a vital cause, benefiting three schools in the Yorkton community. Thanks to their efforts:

- Columbia School received \$3,910.77
- Dr. Brass School received \$3,226.38
- Yorkdale Central School received \$2,639.11

The proceeds raised for these schools will provide students with essential food and nutrition, which are crucial for supporting their learning.

The Ballroom Blitz was a night of dancing, fun, and generous giving, making a significant impact on the local community.

# Thank You





## CANORA COMPOSITE SCHOOL RECEIVES AWARD FOR THEIR WELLNESS AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The Adjudication Committee of the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Saskatchewan determined that Canora Composite School (CCS) earned two awards for their contribution to sustainability and education. CCS staff created the CCS Wellness and Sustainability Initiative which focuses on addressing many needs within their building. These include:

- Limited access to fresh, nutritious food for all students
- Food insecurity among students
- Disconnection between students and nature
- Lack of awareness regarding environmental stewardship and sustainability practices
- Insufficient opportunities for hands-on learning
- The need to address mental health by providing opportunities that reduce stress, promote physical activity, and self-awareness
- Increase the integration of sustainability principles into the school curriculum

CCS staff have completed or are developing the following projects to improve their school and educate students about sustainability:

1. Creation of an in ground 5750sq/ft garden that will supply fresh vegetables for the school kitchen and canteen.
2. An orchard with apple tree, plum trees, saskatoons, haskaps, and cherries that can be utilized in food studies programming.
3. A Wellness Garden that has many native plants of Saskatchewan tied to Indigenous culture.
4. Utilization of a garden tower and vermicomposting throughout the school to reduce waste and educate students.
5. Implementation of the Fish in Schools Program.
6. Expansion and renovation of the school kitchen. This will allow CCS to offer many educational opportunities for students.
7. Actively seeking out ways to purchase hydroponic growing stations to offer healthy nutritious food grown by students year-round.

CCS acknowledges the trust and commitment GSSD has shown towards their programs. Many are supported through their grant writing, but the dream for the CCS kitchen would not have happened without GSSD's overwhelming support. Because of this team effort, Canora Composite School has fulfilled the criteria for an RCE-SK Education for Sustainable Development Recognition Award. In addition to receiving the ESD Recognition Award, CCS was also selected to receive the "Lyle Benko Future Generations Award" for outstanding contributions to Education for Sustainable Development in the K - 12 sector.

Superintendent Shaune Beatty, School Librarian Jennifer Bisschop, and Vice Principal Derek Serdachny were present at the awards banquet and accepted the awards on behalf of the CCS staff.



## 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



### A CHERISHED “SEE YOU SOON” TO A LONG STANDING BOARD MEMBER

What Lois thought was an ordinary School Community Council meeting soon turned into a delightful surprise. On May 7, Churchbridge Public School (CPS) and Langenburg Central School (LCS) gathered for a meal in Churchbridge to celebrate the long-standing service of GSSD Board Member, Lois Smandych.

The evening featured a shared dinner, where both schools exchanged gifts and expressed their heartfelt thanks to Lois.

Since her election in the fall of 2000, Lois has been an integral part of the GSSD Board of Education, which previously included the Yorkdale and York School Divisions. Throughout her tenure, Lois has consistently exhibited exemplary leadership, dedicating her time and expertise to the growth and improvement of the school division. As Lois is not running again in the upcoming November elections, she will be dearly missed by her community!



### BECOME A GSSD BOARD OF EDUCATION TRUSTEE! UPCOMING ELECTIONS

The Good Spirit School Division elects 11 members for a 4-year term, 3 of which represent the City-of-Yorkton at Large. The upcoming term for board members is 2024 to 2028.



**For more details and information about being a trustee, visit our website!**

[gssd.ca/board/2024-trustee-elections](https://gssd.ca/board/2024-trustee-elections) 🔍



### IMPORTANT DATES

**Call for Nominations  
No later than September 24, 2024**

**Nomination Date  
October 9, 2024 by 4:00 p.m.**

**Election Date  
November 13, 2024**

FOCUSING IN ON...



# Land-Based Learning



## CANORA COMPOSITE HISTORY 30 CLASS TAKES PART IN LAND-BASED LEARNING

On Monday, May 27, 2024, the Canora Composite School (CCS) History 30 class attended Land-Based Learning at Madge Lake, Saskatchewan. In the beautiful land of the Cote First Nation, the History 30 class was immersed in the land and experienced transformative learning.



The day began with a Medicine Walk led by, Clifford Crane. Clifford's willingness to share his culture allowed for enriched learning. He shared captivating stories passed down through generations and his experiences through culture. In addition to the Medicine Walk, students gathered supplies from the land for a fire to cook their lunch. Participants also had the opportunity to canoe through Batka Lake. While the students were canoeing, they had the chance to soak in the culture and learnings we experienced in the morning.

One of the most impactful aspects of the time with Clifford was the holistic approach to learning that land-based education provides. The land served as the classroom for the day. Through hands-on experiences, participants gained insights into the importance of balance and respect for nature. The Canora Composite School History 30 class left with not only new skills and knowledge but also with a deeper connection to the land and a greater appreciation for the cultural richness of Indigenous peoples.



A HUGE thank you to Clifford Crane, GSSD, and YTC for this amazing opportunity!!

**Our Motto**  
**Our Mission**  
**Our Values**  
**Our Vision**

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