

# GRASSY PLAINS ELEMENTARY JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Grateful \* Respectful \* Accepting \* Supportive \* Successful \* Yearn for Truth & Knowledge

## I CAN DO HARD THINGS

School Plan to Enhance Student Learning  
2024-2025



## ABOUT US

Grassy Plains Elementary School is a small geographically isolated rural K-7 school with 62 learners, 3 teaching staff, 4 support staff and one teaching principal situated on the Southside of Francois Lake.

We have the honor of residing, playing, and learning on the traditional and unceded ancestral land of three indigenous nations: Skin Tyee, Nee-Tai-Buhn, and Cheslatta. We are fortunate to have supportive members of the community, parents/guardians, volunteers, and Parent Advisory Council (PAC) members who collaborate to maintain Grassy Plains School as a welcoming, secure, and nurturing environment for our learners.

## VISION

To align with our district strategic plan, staff and students have committed **to support the achievement of educational excellence in an environment that honours diversity and personalized learning.**

We are striving to support student success by creating and achieving goals in 3 key areas: Literacy, Numeracy & Social Emotional Learning. In addition to these fundamental areas of learning, our staff and students are working to honor diversity, enhance connections with our community and engage our workforce.

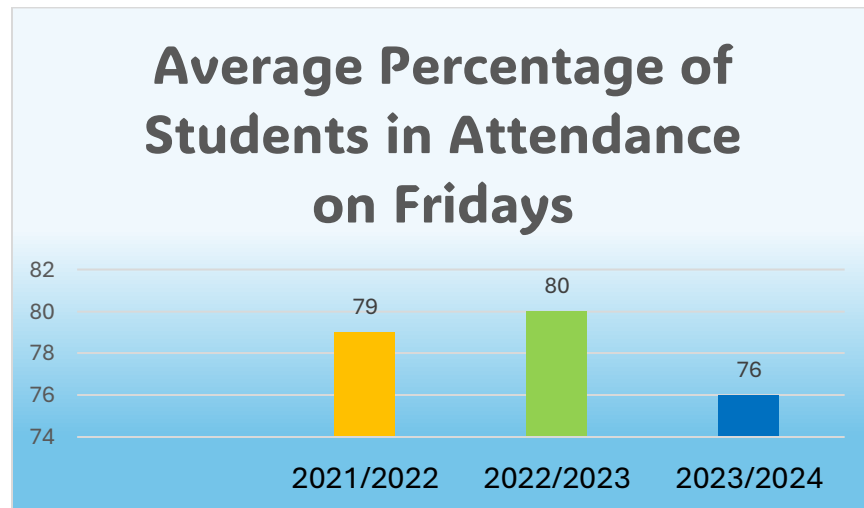


## VULNERABLE LEARNERS – PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

### Supporting Vulnerable Learners and Addressing Attendance Challenges

In our school, we observe ongoing variations in data related to attendance. We have many students who are part of the vulnerable population, facing circumstances beyond their control, such as limited transportation options, bussing issues, illness, and various personal challenges. These students require additional interventions, resources, and reassurances to ensure they can continue their academic journey alongside their peers.

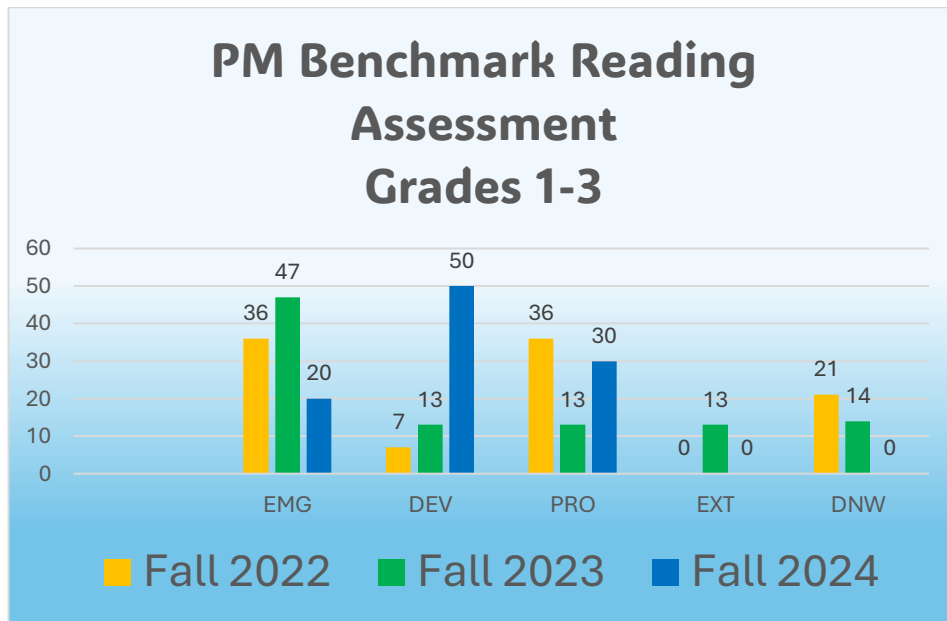
One of our primary approaches to inspiring enthusiasm is by organizing school-themed days that are planned and coordinated by students specifically on Fridays. Historically, Fridays have fewer students attending school. We have observed a fluctuating rise in attendance on these days, as well as on occasions when we provide a hot lunch for the entire student body. However, parents and students have expressed that Friday is typically their go-to day for appointments and out of town travel. We will continue to work on improving attendance not only on Fridays, but every day of the week.



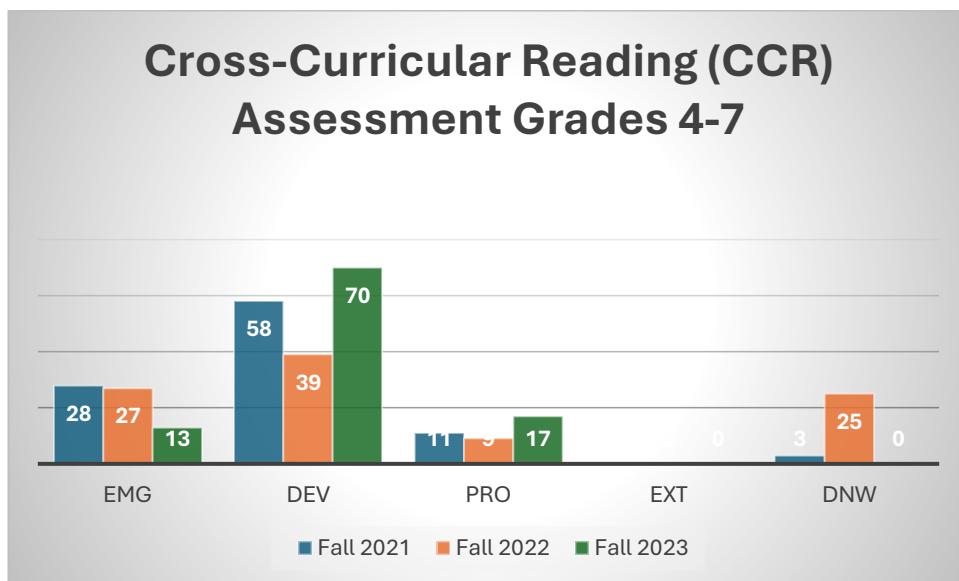
## LITERACY

### School Goal:

**Goal:** By June of this school year (2025), each student will demonstrate progress in reading, writing, comprehension, and oral literacy equivalent to one year of growth.



EMG – Emerging  
DEV – Developing  
PRO – Proficient  
EXT – Extending  
DNW – Did Not Write



**Fall 2024**

## What We Have Seen

**Shared Literacy in Assemblies:** Learners have found great enjoyment in both contributing to and being part of the audience during our shared literacy assemblies. They take pride in their accomplishments and have been inspired by the work of their peers. Recognizing the importance of social learning, we believe continuing this practice will positively impact our learners.

**Whole School/Buddy Reading:** To enhance reading and comprehension skills, we have implemented whole school/buddy-reading as a school-wide activity. This collaborative approach helps students support each other in their reading journey. One positive outcome has been the observation of students in the Grade 2/3 class spontaneously imitating the language and questioning techniques used by their older "buddies" when discussing books collaboratively in their free time on the carpet. In addition, the Indigo Love of Reading Grant has been instrumental in providing new library books, further enriching this initiative. Our goal is to see students increase their reading time, develop a greater love for reading, and enjoy exploring the new materials in our library.



**Assessing Early Learners:** Throughout each school year, we conduct three planned PM benchmark assessments to track the progress of our early learners. Students are given sight-word lists and reading books to take home for additional practice, and their progress is recorded in each reporting period. We also utilize resources such as the Heggerty System of Phonemic Awareness, the Reading A-Z program, and the Janet Mort literacy program to assess student progress and address any identified gaps.

**Assessing Intermediate Learners:** In assessing the progress of intermediate learners, a variety of tools to measure their growth and address areas that need improvement are utilized. Some of which include:

**District Cross-Curricular Reading (CCR):** Intermediate learners' academic achievements and areas for further development are assessed by using this assessment as a benchmark.

**Power Reading:** Intermediate students have experienced positive outcomes from participating in a comprehensive power reading program. This program includes a wide range of assessments that help determine each student's unique learning needs, enabling them to follow a personalized instructional path. Subsequently, students engage in individual exercises specifically tailored to address their skill gaps and enhance their abilities. Online Assessment Platforms: Platforms like Kahoot or Epic books which offer interactive quizzes and assessments have been used to assess intermediate learners' understanding of different subjects.

**Peer and Self-Assessment Tools:** Have enabled intermediate learners to evaluate their own work and provide constructive feedback to their peers through peer and self-assessment tools.

**Rubrics and Checklists:** Rubrics and checklists are used to assess projects and assignments, providing clear assessment criteria and have helped intermediate learners understand expectations and areas that need improvement.

By incorporating these resources into the assessment process, educators are working to develop a comprehensive understanding of the academic growth of intermediate learners. They can then tailor their instruction to support each student's individual progress and work in collaboration with colleagues to determine best practice.



### **Action Plan**

In addition to the strategies listed previously, we intend to track progress as we continue to support the development of reading and comprehension skills using:

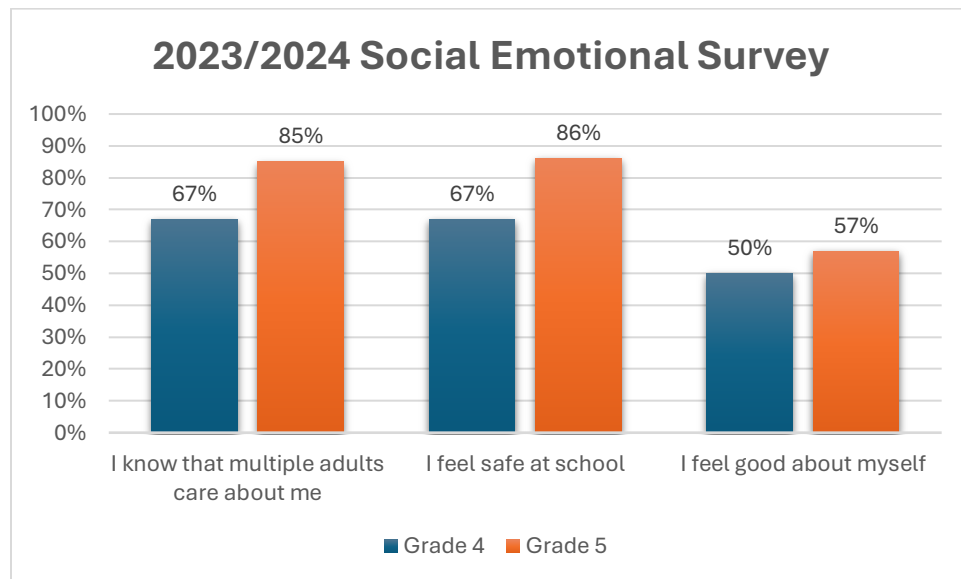
- Play-based “Blitz” (reading practice groups) (primary)
- Literacy-based Professional Development – Janet Mort
- Poem, Story and Reader’s Theatre performances
- Talking circles
- Cultural resources
- Instruction on non-fiction/fiction reading comprehension strategies
- Phonics and sight word practice (primary)
- We also plan to collect data to track progress for each individual student’s reading level in the 2025/2026 school year to better determine if our goal is being reached.



## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

### School Goals:

1. **90% of Grade 6 students surveyed in the 2023/2024 Student Learning Survey will report that they feel good about themselves.**
2. **90% of Grade 6 students surveyed in the 2023/2024 Student Learning Survey will report that they know that three or more adults care about them at school.**
3. **90% of Grade 6 students surveyed in the 2023/2024 Student Learning Survey will report that they feel safe at school.**



### What We Have Seen

In looking at the data collected from our Grade 4 and 7 students from the 2023/2024 school year, we see that most of our students answer in a positive manner regarding their safety, happiness, thoughts about themselves, and their ability to solve conflicts in peaceful ways, but we are not yet reaching our goal of 90%. However, being that our sample size is quite small (less than 20 students) we do not feel that the data accurately compares to that of the district or province and have not used this comparison in our analysis.



Over the past 5 years our district student data portal has shown an average of 9 (low to medium priority) behavior reports per year. Although



we see very few behavior issues in our school, past Student Learning Surveys have shown that we could work on finding out why some students 1) do not feel safe at school, and 2) are unable to recognize that three or more adults care about them. We suspect that during the “COVID-19 years” some students may have felt unsafe due to the pandemic as well as many feelings of connection lost due to field trips being cancelled and remote learning in place. We hope to continue to see a rise in coming years through our continued efforts in utilizing talking circles and classroom activities which focus on the two before mentioned concerns. We are currently making use of our Student Leadership Club through discussions and student-led surveys to discover why some students may be feeling unsafe at school as well as how to identify caring adults within the school.

### Action Plan

The staff felt that the use of various school and community resources would continue to enable students to develop self-regulation strategies as well as give all staff the ability to use the same language and approach to dealing with adverse behaviors. We have seen positive benefits from incorporating shared language around Stop, Now and Plan (SNAP). We have seen huge benefits in devoting the time it takes to discuss issues in talking circles while working to incorporate aspects of traditional practices of restorative justice when negative behavior occur.

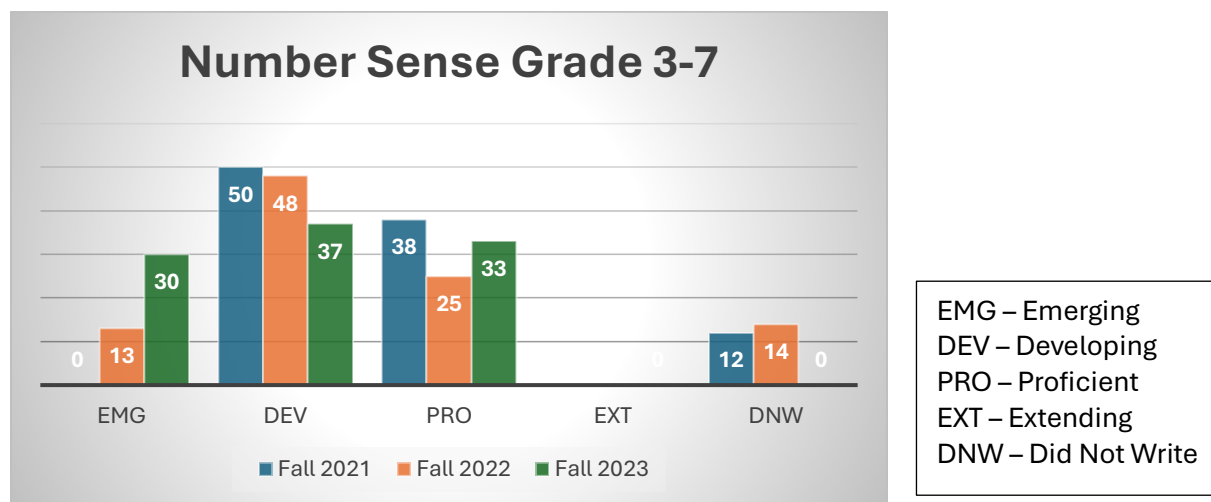
- Stop Now & Plan (SNAP) program
- Growth Mindset
- Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE)
- District and community counselors
- Talking circles
- Student Voice (Leadership Club)
- Student Self-Reflection on Goals



## NUMERACY

**School Goal: By the end of June 2024, every student will demonstrate a one-year improvement in number sense.**

In years past, number sense has decreased when comparing our primary learners with our intermediate. We are hopeful that our small math groups and concentrated work on number sense will continue making a difference for our intermediate learners. Staff are reporting that students are exhibiting less math anxiety, have demonstrated an increased math vocabulary, have improved problem-solving skills, are more capable of independent work and are readily sharing their ideas and understanding with their peers.



### What We Have Seen

Every 4-6 weeks learners perform SNAP math assessments based on the units of learning they are involved in. Within our Professional Learning Community (PLC) we plan, collaborate, reassess, and make adaptations as we see progress and gaps within the SNAP assessments. We are fortunate to benefit from smaller class sizes which assist in creating small learning groups within each mixed-grade classroom. Each Thursday, K-7 learners participate in weekly “Math Blitz” (play-based learning). As a result, we have seen our learners become more engaged. Learners have reported, ***“I like math better when we are in smaller groups, the teacher doesn’t seem to be rushing through so much”*** (Grade 6 Learner) and ***“I love the math games we play; it helps me have fun with my numbers”*** (Grade 4 Learner).

**Action Plan** By using a variety of resources and activities for teaching number sense, we feel confident that we will continue to see improvement with each learner. Some of the resources and activities used include:

- **Manipulatives and Visual Aids:** Utilize manipulatives such as counting blocks, number lines, and ten frames to help students visualize and understand numbers.



- **Number Talks:** Engage students in regular number talks to promote mental math and develop their number sense through discussions and problem-solving.
- **Math Games & Weekly Math Blitz:** Incorporate math related games to make learning numbers engaging and fun.
- **Real-World Applications:** Connect number sense to real-life situations, such as shopping, budgeting, running concession and taking part in Kids Market to demonstrate the practical relevance of numbers.
- **Math Literature:** Use children's books and stories that involve numbers and counting to reinforce number sense concepts in a creative and engaging way.
- **Online Interactive Tools:** Integrate interactive online resources such as Mathletics that offer activities and games focused on developing number sense skills.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Provide activities and resources that cater to different learning styles and abilities, ensuring all students can develop their number sense effectively.
- **Monthly Progress Assessments with District SNAP Tool:** effectively use this assessment tool to determine learning gaps and then collaboratively plan for success.
- **Math Activities and Suggestions in Newsletter/Math Nights with Families at the School:** Provide games and ideas to families to continue to build number sense at home through play.

By incorporating these resources and activities, educators can create a comprehensive and engaging learning environment to support the development of students' number sense.

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## HONORING DIVERSITY

We have had the privilege of utilizing the wealth of traditional knowledge from the three Indigenous communities on the Southside of Burns Lake and actively seek out opportunities to connect and with our local community members to bring authentic teachings into our school. Our school participates in a yearly tea with the local elders where learners can showcase their projects and learning which have a connection with our local land and people. Each of our classrooms participates in the development of Carrier vocabulary as well as weekly talking circles. As previously mentioned with our literacy goals, we are working with students to build connections with their community by learning the history and oral stories of the Elders in our community. While planning with the First People's Principles of Learning in mind, staff work to



incorporate traditional ways of knowing, being and doing into all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for holistic, hands-on, meaningful learning which honor the connection to self, community and place have assisted in developing much of our collaborative inquiries and learning through play. We have worked to think creatively to provide meaningful connections to the land through photography, art, science, physical education, and traditional plant identification and uses.



In addition to honoring the knowledge of our Indigenous communities, we prioritize creating a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment for all students. We believe that every student deserves to be respected and valued, regardless of their race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression.

**Building Positive Learning Environments:** We dedicate our time and energy to fostering positive learning environments through various activities and initiatives. Special events like Pink Shirt Day and the District Share the Love Day are an opportunity for our school community to come together and promote kindness, respect, and acceptance. On these occasions, we engage in teaching moments that underscore the importance of accepting others, regardless of their background or identity.

**School Community Engagement:** To further nurture a sense of community, we use a school community whiteboard to share daily quotes and thoughts. These messages encourage kindness, the development of self-identity, perseverance, and community spirit. In February, which we celebrate as Kindness Month, we focus on daily announcements that highlight themes of friendship, positive communication, conflict resolution, and the celebration of differences that make us all unique.

**Embracing Cultural Diversity:** In addition to fostering an inclusive environment, we also celebrate cultural diversity through special events and activities. For instance, we annually mark the Chinese New Year with classroom celebrations and various cultural arts performances throughout the year. This helps students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures, fostering a welcoming environment for all.



Grassy Plains School embraced the spirit of community and inclusivity during Share the Love Week by engaging in heartwarming activities centered around the book "All Are Welcome", by Alexandra Penfold. The school leadership students took the initiative to organize group games and activities, transforming lunchtime into a celebration of friendship and acceptance. In addition, every student at Grassy Plains School took part in creating a banner displayed in the gym, reading "All Are Welcome Here." This banner serves as a reminder of the school's commitment to inclusivity and kindness. Within the banner, students shared their creativity through small works of art that illustrated how they make everyone feel welcome. The artwork depicted acts of making friends, sharing, accepting differences, and spreading kindness throughout the school community. Through these collective efforts, Grassy Plains School not only celebrated diversity but also strengthened the bonds among students, ensuring a warm and inviting environment for all. Share the Love Week was a resounding success, highlighting the importance of unity and acceptance in building a caring school community.



### ENGAGING OUR WORKFORCE

We take pride in the 'family feeling' our school offers our learners and see the value in collaborating with our LSW's, bus drivers and custodial staff. The learners know these adults by name, and they see that it takes a large team of caring individuals to operate our school. Staff members also enjoy the meaningful relationships that they build with our learners.

Our staff members have seen positive benefits from collaboration with each other. Over the past three years our focus areas of inquiry, which have been specific to both numeracy and literacy, have allowed our small school opportunities to try things that larger schools may not.

### ENHANCE CONNECTIONS

In asking "How can we involve the community in our educational goals?" we have considered and incorporated the following strategies:

1. **Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with local businesses, organizations, and individuals to provide resources, mentorship, and real-world learning opportunities for students.



2. **Community Events:** Organized events, such as open houses, BINGO nights, assemblies, Elders Tea and Soup and Bannock day, Kids Market, and our Christmas concert to engage the community and showcase student accomplishments.
3. **Volunteer Programs:** Establish volunteer opportunities that allow community members to contribute their time and expertise to support student learning and school initiatives. (Outdoor learning, extracurricular activities, etc).
4. **Community Feedback:** Seek input from community members through our Parent Advisory Committee and Indigenous Education Co-Ordinator's from the Nations to ensure that educational goals reflect the needs and values of the community and families.
5. **Community Outreach:** Communicate regularly with the community through newsletters, social media, and public meetings to share progress on educational goals and solicit feedback. (RCMP liason, Chinook Community Response Center, Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Skin Tyee Nation).

By actively involving the community in our educational goals, we can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for our students.

**Spirit North Partnership** We have a valuable connection with Spirit North, an organization dedicated to empowering Indigenous youth in sports, academics, and life. Through sports and play, Spirit North helps youth tackle challenges, develop leadership skills, improve health and wellness, discover talents, and unlock their potential. Every Tuesday, Spirit North hosts a variety of activities at Grassy School, including trail running, mountain biking, and x-country skiing. These hands-on and engaging activities provide equal learning opportunities for all learners and complement our daily school work.



**Community Youth Programs** Grassy School has transformed into a community hub where several extracurricular youth programs take place. These programs include the Junior NBA program, the Cheslatta After-School Program, and the Southside 4H Club. Each of these programs enhances our learners' experiences, expands their learning, and allows community members to connect with and support our students.

#### Grade 6/7 Leadership Club

Another valuable connection established is the Student The Student Leadership Club at Grassy Plains School recently pulled off a fantastic event that brought joy and excitement to all the staff and students. They organized a school dance that catered to all ages during the final hour of the school day, creating a fun and inclusive atmosphere for everyone.

The club members showcased their exceptional leadership skills, including teamwork, communication, and creativity, as they planned every detail of the event. They planned and implemented decorating, coordinated delicious food options, and took turns being the DJ, ensuring that the music kept everyone dancing and smiling. The club's efforts not only fostered a sense of community but also provided a space where students could connect and make lasting memories. We are incredibly proud of our students for demonstrating their leadership abilities and for creating a welcoming environment for all. Their hard work and dedication truly made this dance a memorable occasion at Grassy Plains School!



The club offers our learners the chance to engage with the community by collecting and donating food for hampers, organizing fundraisers for the Chinook Emergency Response Society, and undertaking a new project each year that leaves a lasting impact on the school and community. The Leadership Club works to foster connections among our school learners and their community through School Spirit days on Fridays, where they organize simple games and activities during lunchtime. They also coordinate larger activities that involve local knowledge keepers and artisans, providing school-wide in-class instruction on various subjects such as bannock making, foraging, collecting and photographing local histories, mapping and abstract art.



## EQUITY FOR ALL LEARNERS

To help our students get off to the right start each morning we have continued to provide a hot breakfast daily as well a variety of dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables in each classroom. In addition to fueling their bodies this program gives our learners unique social connections with their peers and teachers.

Staff continue to strive to meet each child where they are. In addition to our teaching staff, our learners are supported by our Indigenous Education Co-Ordinator as well as 4 LSW's within our school.

Each of our students are given opportunities to lead and serve in their classroom and school through the gardening, recycling, and composting programs.

