

St. Frances students recognize work of parent group

When your student population comes from over 50 Saskatoon neighbourhoods and areas outside of the city, such as the RM of Corman Park and Whitecap Dakota First Nation, building a sense of community can be a challenge. But there has been a cause that has brought students, families and staff together to create a strong, unified community—the need for a new or renovated school facility.

Students and staff hosted an event at the school on March 16 to recognize the efforts of their parents and guardians. Students made class thank-you cards and presented them to parents at the school-community celebration. Elder Reg Bugler also presented parents with a blanket, a traditional First Nations expression of gratitude on behalf of the community

St. Frances Cree Bilingual School has seen increased enrolment for several years. Portable classrooms have infringed on the already-too-small playground space as much as they possibly can. The gym can no longer house all the students for assemblies, let alone any school or community events. The list of facility deficiencies grows as demand for the bilingual program increases.

“We constantly get feedback from parents that they love the program, the fact students are learning their Cree language and culture, but we also hear that the building itself is becoming an impediment to fully realizing the potential of student learning and program partnerships,” said Darren Fradette, principal at St. Frances.

“Many of our parents took it upon themselves to form a group to help improve our facility,” said Fradette. “They asked us, ‘What can we do? How can we help get a facility that our children and the program deserve?’ They’ve arranged meetings and presentations with the board, they’ve done letter writing campaigns to the Ministry of Education, they’ve done a lot of work to raise awareness of the need for a new or renovated facility. A side benefit of those efforts is a really close school community. And I think students realize that and wanted to say thank you in some tangible way.”

Images are available for media use at https://gscsca-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/dekunz_gscs_ca/EuVHkxA8hE9JgPizn9jFJwB7Xewptb1v-S_PKPTy4UwkQ?e=U3vYha

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