

2018 - 2019

WELCOME TO

Big Grassy River First Nation



TEACH
FOR
CANADA



boozhoo



Mishkosiminiziibiing Big Grassy River First Nation

Boozhoo, Greetings!

On behalf of the community and Pegamigaabo School, I warmly welcome you to Mishkosiminiziibiing-Big Grassy River First Nation.

As you will learn, the land and Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) culture is central in our education. Each one of you have been chosen to come to our community to teach. Big Grassy River is proud to be inclusive of peoples from many different backgrounds. We have chosen you because we see an openness to learn, a potential to each contribute using your own skill sets, and a commitment to invest in students.

As you start to work with the students and the community, you will come to hear about the many initiatives such as our claim process that began in the 1970s alongside with the Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation. This process continues to this day because we still hold onto our Anishinaabe ways and relationship to land. You will learn much about the histories of our community, Treaty 3 and the Ojibwe people.

While the first few months here may be different from what you could imagine, we want you to know that this place will become your home. Our community is in its beautiful natural environment close to Assabaska Park and the scenic landscape of the region known as Lake of the Woods. We want you to bring this community – the land and its people—into your classroom every single day.

We look forward to working together as we educate our children to be leaders for tomorrow. With your openness to learn, especially from the young people who will become your students, take the time to listen to them and know that you are fulfilling a wonderful opportunity to help uplift the future generation of Mishkosiminiziibiing. Miigwech-thank you!

Sincerely,

Lyn Blackburde
Education Director and Principal

Community

All information written is directly from the series of three posters and plaques, "Healing an Old Wound: Reclaiming Our Land".

The Assabaska Negotiating Team included many leaders and Elders. They were informed by community members and Elders Pegamigaabo (Billy Archie), Shaawaninootinook (Maggie Copenace), Kemiwan'aanakwatook (Rosie Bob). The timeline also includes information from Robert Archie.



A Brief History

By 1929

Petitions were circulating for reserve land to be sold for new settlers to move in. Ontario pressed Canada to release the 1600 acre shoreline reserve.

1930

Canada "relinquished" the Assabaska shoreline reserve – without consulting or informing the people of Assabaska.

1927-1951

It was against the law in Canada to raise money to represent Indian claims against the government.

It was not until the Chiefs Treaty #3 organized their own Grand Council in 1970 that the Assabaska First Nations gained the research capability to pursue this issue.

1964

Big Grassy River and Ojibways of Onigaming separated into two separate reserves (R. Archie).

1977

The First Nations of Mishkosiiniiziibing (Big Grassy River) and the Ojibways of Onigaming filed notice of our "Claim" to the Assabaska shoreline reserve against the governments of Ontario and Canada. Process to transfer land back to the band began

1980

Both Ontario and Canada accepted this issue for negotiations.

Present

We have been pursuing a just and fair settlement ever since.



Kaa ikito waat Kichi Anishinaabeg

Our elders, Sawan and Kwatook said the land was just borrowed and should be given back.

Treaty 3 territory contains 55,000 square miles of the Boundary Waters, now known as Northwestern Ontario, Manitoba and Minnesota. Reserve lands within Treaty #3 represent only 0.5% of that land mass.

Treaty 3 was signed by the Anishinaabeg Nation of the Boundary Waters and the British Crown in 1873. The The Anishinaabe Nation agreed to share the land with the newcomers and the Crown made promises to the Anishinaabeg that they would prosper in the years to come. Wildland and agricultural reserves would be set aside.

A 1600 acre reserve was chosen by Assabaska leaders and set aside by the Crown in the right of Canada (the federal government). The Assabaska shortline reserve (35E1) connected Little Grassy 35E and Big Grassy 35G reserves.

Big Grassy River Community Map



Pegamigaabo School



School Population

70

Principal

Lyn Blackburne

Grades

Junior Kindergarten
to Grade 8

Facilities

- Computer lab
- School gym
- Library is for both the school and community
- Outdoor skating rink, soccer field and baseball field
- Two playgrounds
- New 50 foot tower for improved high speed internet.

Welcome!

The school is named after a healing elder from Big Grassy River, Pegamigaabo, who remained an active advisor to many people in the community until the age of 106. Our school and community are closely connected to our culture. We will work together in a good way using the Anishinaabe teachings and beliefs passed down from our elders and ceremonies. It's important for our children to know who they are as Anishinaabe people and we embrace this opportunity to grow and learn together. Welcome to Big Grassy River First Nation.





What is the school most proud of...

The team at Pegamigaabo School encourages students to respect their peers, teachers, land, and community members. In order to build a holistic respect of others, the school treats itself as a community centre. Staff are encouraged to invite community members and elders into the classroom regularly. Teachers at Pegamigaabo School not only teach, but they are a part of a larger vision for the bright future of Big Grassy. The team at Pegamigaabo is proud that the economic development of the community is paired with student-centered learning. Students learn the core of what it means to live the good life: getting along well with others, respecting others differences, and accentuating inclusivity.

Unique Events

- Seasonal Feasts (fall, winter, spring)
- Traditional pow wow
- Terry Fox Run at Assabaska Park
- Treaty Signing Day
- Aboriginal Veterans Day
- John Gibbins Memorial Fish Derby
- March Break community activities
- Winter carnival
- Graduation Feast and celebration
- Back-to-school celebration
- September 30: Residential school survivor day

Unique Classes Offered

- Ojibwe language classes
- Students go swimming twice a month and skating twice a month

Unique Classes Offered

- Daily hot lunch and breakfast
- After school Right-to-Play
- Kids in the Kitchen





A Day in the Life of a Teacher

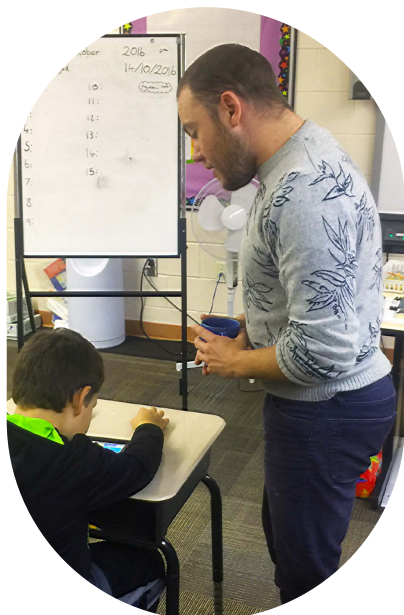
The day begins at 8 am.

Teachers have 45 minutes in the morning to prepare last minute things for the day or to prepare for the days ahead. Students arrive by bus starting at 8:10, the second bus arrives around 8:30. There are three buses that come to the school (two from Big Grassy and one from the neighbouring reserve Big Island First Nation (Anishnaabeg of Naongashiing) with 17 students coming from Big Island. A school breakfast program ensures that students have a meal in the morning. Students have twenty minutes to eat and then play outside until the bell rings at 8:45. Students are given 5-10 minutes to come in and organize themselves before the honour song is played and student-led announcements are made.

Another bell sounds at 9 am marking the beginning of classes. Instructional time runs from 9 am to 10:30 am and then students get a 15 minute recess. We have a duty schedule that rotates on a 3 week rotation. Each day, every teacher is responsible for 30 minutes of duty. This will alternate between 15 minute recesses, lunchroom duty, and 30 minute lunch recess duty.

Instructional time begins again at 10:45 and continues until 12:00 pm when lunch starts. Students have 30 minutes to eat and then 30 minutes to be outside. Students stay for lunch every day and we have a school kitchen staff that makes delicious meals for them. All students eat their lunch in the gym.

The lunch break ends at 1:00 pm and instructional time runs until 2:30 when there is a 15-minute recess. There is a short block of time between 2:45 and 3:10 to end the day. The first bus arrives for student pick up at 3:10, the next 2 buses come around 3:25. We are given some time at the end of the day to prep as well. Students can also participate in the Right to Play program from 3:30 to 5:30. Our day ends at 4 pm. The students receive gym instruction every day, which provides classroom teachers with a 45-minute prep throughout the day.





Teacherages

The teacherage is a one-story house with 3 bedrooms and a spacious living room and kitchen. There is a bathroom with shower and bathtub and laundry facilities in the house. There is a shed for additional storage if necessary. The driveway has parking for 4 vehicles. We have made a beautiful fire pit in the very large backyard and we are right down the street from one of the main beaches.

The teacherage on Anishinaabe Way is part of a 5-plex housing unit. There are neighbours on both sides. There is a large shared driveway and yard. Teacherages are furnished but teachers must bring their own linens. There is an abundance of cutlery/kitchenware in the teacherage across from the school (512 Beach Rd).

Wifi is available in the teacherage opposite the school (512 Beach Rd). The teacherage on Anishinaabe Way does not currently have access. Teachers who live on Anishinaabe Way need a USB Wifi dongle. We have decent cell reception across all major networks. You do not need to get TbayTel.

While Big Grassy is not officially a dry reserve, teachers are asked not to consume alcohol in the teacherages.

Teachers are allowed to bring pets into the community, although cats, if allowed outside, may require extra supervision. There are some stray dogs in the community. The vast majority are friendly.





Life in the Community



In the spring the community loves to play baseball. It is very popular. Also in the spring the community begins to hold bingo nights to raise money for the Pow wow. All community feasts this year have happened at the school (we had 3 of them).

What's going on in Big Grassy?

There are notices up in school, the band office and sometimes in Zig's Convenience Store relating to events going on in the community. The school is often involved in community activities, so you'll be kept up-to-date on what's going on. There is also a community Facebook page.

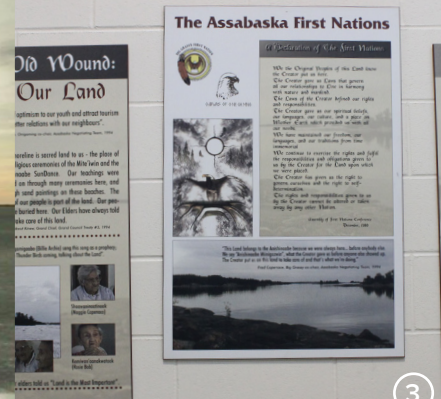
Around the Community



1



2



3

1

Sunset on the lake

2

Beach shoreline

3

Community History

4

Wild rice field



4

10

Quick Facts

Chief
Carol Copenace

Council
Lynn Indian
Chris Jack
Carol Copenace
Deborah Whetzel
John Copenace

Community Name
Mishkosiminiziibiing-Big Grassy River First Nation

Tribal Council
Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council

Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)
Grand Council of Treaty #3



Population On-Reserve

300



Language Spoken

**Ojibway
and English**



Treaty

Treaty 3



Average Yearly Temperature

-21°C
January

24°C
July

Average annual snowfall of 158cm.



Winter Road Open Dates

Accessible

Year-round via road.



Services and Stores In and Around Big Grassy River

Big Grassy - Zigs Convenience Store. Prices are a bit more expensive due to the rural location. The community post boxes are outside of Zigs. Mail is delivered and collected every day. There's a small fitness centre (a key is required to access the fitness centre - it can be acquired from the band office).

Big Island - J&J's convenience store. Prices are a bit more expensive due to the rural location. There's a larger fitness centre (a key is required to access the fitness centre - it can be acquired from the band office for \$20).

Morson - Buena Vista Restaurant (open late spring to early fall) - A nice little restaurant overlooking Lake of the Woods. Good food and great pies!

Emo (roughly 1 hour away) - Cloverleaf Groceries, CIBC, Tompkins Home Hardware

Rainy River (roughly 45 minutes away) - There's a small hardware store, a drugstore/pharmacy, a bakery, a walk-in clinic/small ER. Rainy River has an OPP unit too.

Baudette, Minnesota (roughly 45 minutes away) - Lake of the Wood's grocery (with a small take-out Pizza Hut concession), several gas stations, Subway, McDonald's, True Value Hardware Store, Bowling, Movie Theatre, Dollar General, and Ronning's, a small department store.

Fort Frances (1.5 hours) - Typical amenities of any average sized town.

International Falls, Minnesota (1.5 hours) - Typical amenities of any average sized town.

Kenora (3 hours) - Typical amenities of any average sized town.



Meet Lyn Blackburde,

Principal and Education Director

What do you like most about Big Grassy River?

The community supports culture. They are proud of who they are. There is a respect for the culture, and it is practiced in the community. People are also aware of First Nations history. I also like the location. It is in the bush, so we are surrounded by nature in the woods. I can't live without the connection to the trees and the grass and the opportunity to offer tobacco.

What do you like to do when you have a day off?

I like to take part in ceremony (sweat or a gathering). I enjoy getting together with teachers for a meal. It is important that the staff feels a sense of community and be able to enjoy calm moments together and have conversations outside of work. It allows us to stay on the same page. I also like to sleep!

How would you describe your community?

Keewaywin is small and quiet. People here are generally friendly and welcoming. When there are issues in the community everyone comes together to support each other and to help.



Directory

Education Director

807-488-5916

School Office

807-488-5916


513 Beach Road,
Big Grassy
First Nation Box #453,
Morson, ON
P0W 1J0

Website

<http://biggrassy.ca/>

Contributors

Robert Archie
Lyn Blackburde
Jane Tom
Roy Tom



“The school was built seventeen years ago and was seen as a real benefit to the community, but Lyn Blackburde is the principal and the change that this community has been waiting for.”

– Robert Archie, elder and historian



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