

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,

Christopher Paul Kempster Johnson
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 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

67

Education Director and Principal

Christopher Paul
Kempster Johnson

Grades

Junior Kindergarten
to Grade 8

Facilities

- School gym
- Library is for both the school and community
- Soccer and baseball fields
- Two playgrounds
- New 50 foot tower for improved high speed internet
- Big Grassy Public Library and the recently updated Computer Lab are located within the school

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
- Family Day 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 or ice skating twice a month

Programming

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





A Day in the Life of a Teacher

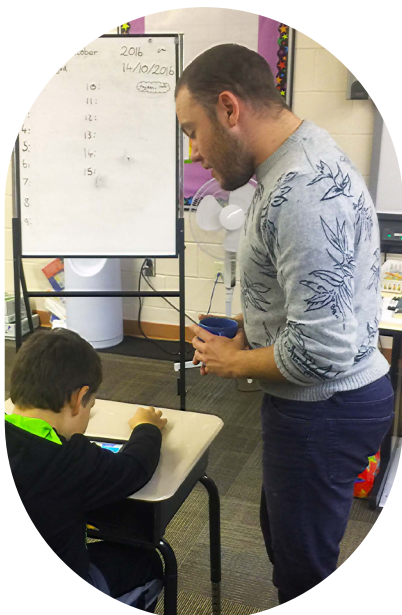
The day begins at 8 AM.

Teachers have 45 minutes in the morning to prepare any last-minute plans for the day or week ahead. Students arrive by bus at 8:10 AM and 8:30 AM. Students also arrive from the neighbouring Big Island First Nation. A school breakfast program ensures that students have a meal each morning. After getting to school, they have twenty minutes to eat before playing outside until the first bell rings at 8:45 AM. Students are given 5-10 minutes to get to the classroom and organize their things before the honour song and student-led announcements.

Another bell sounds at 9 AM, marking the beginning of classes. Instructional time runs from 9 AM to 10:30 AM, when students receive a 15-minute recess. Staff has a duty schedule that rolls 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 and recess duty.

Instructional time resumes at 10:45 AM and continues until 12:00 PM when lunch begins. Students stay for lunch every day and enjoy delicious meals that are prepared by our kitchen staff. Students have 30 minutes to eat their lunch in the gym before 30 minutes of outdoor recess. The lunch break ends at 1:00 PM and instructional time runs until 2:30 PM, at which point we take a 15-minute recess. There is a short block of time between 2:45 and 3:10 PM to end the day.

The busses arrive for student pick up at 3:10 and 3:25 PM. Teachers receive some additional time at the end of the day to work and prepare lessons. Students also receive gym instruction every day, which provides classroom teachers with an additional 45-minute prep window. Students can choose to participate in the Right To Play program from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Our day ends at 4 PM.





Teacherages

There are currently three teacherages in the community of Big Grassy; 512 Beach Road, 309 Ojibwe Road, and 632 Highway 621.

The teacherage on Beach Road is located directly opposite the school, and the ones located on Ojibwe Road and Highway 621 are only a short drive away (or a 15 to 20 minute walk away if you feel like getting your steps in). Each teacherage contains 2 to 3 bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a living room. Each teacherage has ample parking and a yard. The teacherages come fully furnished and contain all of the essentials you'll need. Teachers should bring their pillows and linens.

All of the teacherages have WiFi access. The teacherage on Beach Road is close enough to the school to access the WiFi with a signal booster. Starlink satellite internet dishes are currently installed on the teacherages on Ojibwe Road and Highway 621.

Pets are allowed in the teacherages.





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.

Get to Know Big Grassy Community Members

MEET DEB LUDEMAN, Band Councillor

What do you like most about your community?

The location, the environment around the lake, the bush, and the people. In difficult times, everyone helps one each other.

What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

I usually go into the bush and reconnect with the land.

How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

It is located on Lake of the Woods and Grassy River. 250 people live in the community. Where we are is a very peaceful environment. People come here to vacation and fish. It is semi-remote, isolated. It has road access - the nearest bank and hospital are a half hour drive away.



MEET GLENN ARCHIE, Band Councillor

What do you like most about your community?

It encompasses the lake. I have moved away a few times, but I keep returning. Wind, waves, birds - that's what brings me back. And of course, my children and grandchildren.

What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

I like to sit at my table and watch TV, or listen to the radio. I like to walk outside. I go fishing every weekend if the weather is nice, unless I'm at a pow wow. I have a food concession at the pow wow. We serve bannock burgers, wild rice, fries, and coffee.

How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

We all come together when things happen. We are situated on the beautiful shores of Lake of the Woods. There is lots to do outdoors; fishing, hunting, sightseeing, BBQs, boating, canoeing. We're all taught to treat people with respect. I'm sure anyone would be well received. It is a good experience for our community, having kids interact with diverse people from across Canada. We have very nice people here too.

Quick Facts

Chief
Lynn Indian

Council
Elvis Adams
Glen Archie
Jeff Morrison
Deborah Whetzel

Community Name
Mishkosiminiziibing-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

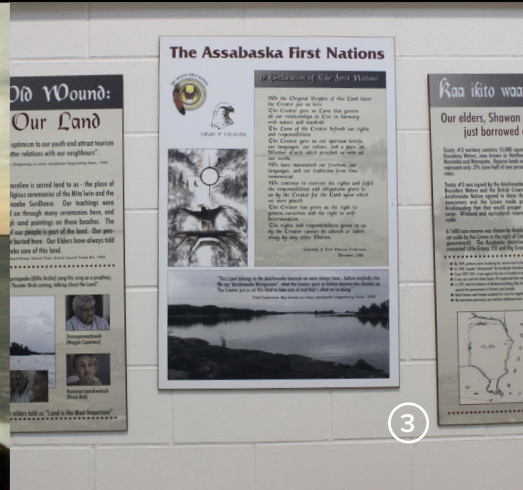
Average annual snowfall of 158cm.



Winter Road Access

Year-round

Around the Community



①

Sunset on the lake

②

Beach shoreline

③

Community History

④

Wild rice field





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.

Morson - Buena Vista Restaurant (Open late spring to early fall) - A nice little restaurant overlooking Lake of the Woods. Good food and great pies. Pelican Landing Kitchen (open late spring to early fall) - This take-out service has a variety of tasty dishes and appetizers available.

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.





Directory

Education Director
807-488-5916

School Office
807-488-5916

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

Website
<http://biggrassy.ca/>



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