

2024-2025 Annual School Development Report

Grandy's River Collegiate

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School Vision Statement: Grandy's River Collegiate is dedicated to fostering a balanced environment where social-emotional well-being, a passion for lifelong learning, and the skills for success in an ever-changing world thrive. We empower students to build resilience, embrace curiosity, and develop a strong sense of respect and responsibility. Through hard work, collaboration, and a commitment to personal growth, we prepare each student to face the challenges of tomorrow with confidence, empathy, and a deep sense of purpose.

Strategic Issue: Student Engagement & Success - Optimal Learning Environments

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue? What evidence did you have?

We recognized Student Engagement and Success through the lens of Optimal Learning Environments as a strategic issue based on a combination of data, stakeholder feedback, and alignment with broader strategic goals. Achievement data revealed persistent gaps in performance, and attendance across different student groups, indicating that not all students were being supported effectively. In addition, student and family surveys highlighted concerns around motivation, sense of belonging, and active participation, suggesting a lack of engagement rooted in the learning environment. Teachers and staff also observed challenges in sustaining student interest and meeting diverse learning needs, reinforcing the idea that systemic changes were needed. This issue closely aligns with our strategic priorities around equity, inclusion, and academic excellence. Furthermore, extensive educational research supports the idea that optimal learning environments—those that are inclusive, supportive, and well-structured—are essential for improving student engagement and success.

Year-end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

As we reflect on the school year, it is clear that significant progress has been made in supporting student engagement, enhancing learning environments, and promoting cross-curricular learning through our strategic focus on Optimal Learning Environments. Under the initiative *Learning Without Limits*, students in Grades 7–9 ELA engaged in a highly interactive project using Minecraft Education to recreate scenes from *The Hunger Games*. This innovative approach increased engagement and deepened comprehension. Teachers across grade levels embraced Chromebooks to facilitate a wide range of activities, including writing, research, and digital art. Math students in K–6 participated in various virtual learning sessions, while students in Grades 5–9 took part in Creation Quest virtual experiences. Additionally, K–6 students benefited from in-person learning with FOS 3 Program Specialists, and K–3 students participated in food taste-testing activities that integrated lessons in health, science, and geography.

Cross-curricular integration was a strong focus through the *Connected Curriculum*s initiative. One highlight was the GRC Kitchen Party, a school-wide project blending Social Studies, Art, and Music to help students explore their Newfoundland and Labrador heritage. In Grades 7–9, ELA and Technology classes collaborated on the Hunger Games unit using Minecraft, which proved highly engaging and effective. Math classes partnered with Physical Education to introduce darts, reinforcing numeracy skills through active learning. In the early years, the monthly food tasting program provided an opportunity to connect Health, Science, ELA, and Art, as students reflected on their experiences through writing and illustration. During the holiday season, Grade 5–6 students participated in a heartwarming project that combined Art and ELA by creating Christmas cards for local seniors, inspired by the story, *The Gift*.

Professional learning under the *Journey to Success* initiative was robust and impactful. Staff participated in a wide range of professional development sessions, including eNLighTenED, Core French, K–6 ELA Assessment, Reading Specialist Training, Grade 7–9 Science Assessment Cohort, Generative AI in the Classroom, and the Canva Exchange. These opportunities supported teacher growth and directly influenced innovative classroom practices.

Through the *Space for Success* initiative, numerous enhancements were made to physical learning spaces to improve student comfort and focus. Several classrooms were redesigned with alternative seating, soft lighting, and inviting decor. The Learning Commons became a well-used space for K–9 students, offering flexible seating, workstations, and access to STEM tools. Whiteboard walls in Math and Science classrooms promote collaboration and hands-on problem-solving. The sensory room was upgraded with new tools and furniture to better support students needing sensory regulation. An Active NL grant allowed for significant improvements to indoor and outdoor physical education equipment, including the addition of inclusive play structures and adaptive games like VolleyBound, which supports participation for students of all abilities.

Overall, the year demonstrated meaningful progress in aligning our practices with the strategic issue of Optimal Learning Environments. Through intentional efforts across learning, space, and community, we have created more engaging, inclusive, and supportive conditions for student success.

Strategic Issue: Building Relationships & Community Partnerships - Optimal Learning Environments

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue? What evidence did you have?

We identified Building Relationships and Community Partnerships through the lens of Optimal Learning Environments as a strategic issue based on feedback from students, families, and staff who consistently emphasized the importance of strong relationships and meaningful connections within the school community. Survey data revealed that students who felt more connected to adults at school and supported by their communities were more likely to be engaged, attend regularly, and perform better academically. At the same time, teachers expressed a need for stronger partnerships with families and local organizations to better address students' holistic needs, including mental health, basic resources, and enrichment opportunities. Additionally, research confirms that collaborative, trust-based relationships are a foundational component of optimal learning environments and are essential for fostering a positive school climate. These insights made it clear that without intentional efforts to strengthen relationships and partnerships, efforts to improve student engagement and success would fall short.

Year-end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

Throughout the school year, we have made meaningful progress in building relationships and strengthening community partnerships as part of our strategic focus on Optimal Learning Environments. These efforts have created more inclusive, engaging, and supportive experiences for

students while deepening connections between the school, families, and the broader community.

Under our *Building Bridges* initiative, we began the year with an Open House to welcome families into our learning spaces and connect with teachers. While attendance was limited, those who participated expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about school plans. More successful events followed, such as our Walk to Breakfast, which brought together volunteers from the community to prepare and serve food to students, fostering a sense of care and connection. The Grab n' Go Breakfast Program continued throughout the year, with the school's admin team leading the daily service and the Rose Blanche Recreation Director providing a hot breakfast every Wednesday. Additionally, the Burnt Islands Recreation Committee generously prepared a hot breakfast in November, reinforcing the strong ties between the school and local organizations.

Our holiday celebrations provided further opportunities for community building. Grades 5–9 students created and delivered Christmas cards and candy canes to seniors in Burnt Islands and Rose Blanche, with additional cards delivered by the Youth Voices group to Port aux Basques. The Christmas concert was a notable success, marking the first time all junior high students participated, and drew an enthusiastic crowd of families and community members. Students proudly represented the school in the Burnt Islands Christmas Parade, and our traditional Christmas Brunch and Turkey Dinner continued to serve as a cherished gathering, supported by generous parent and community volunteers. These events not only brought people together but ensured that all students experienced the joy and warmth of the holiday season.

In addition to festive events, learning opportunities connected students to the community in meaningful ways. The visit from the ACAP Humber Arm Aquatic Invasive Species group provided hands-on environmental education and will continue in the spring with a visit to the community wharf. The introduction of the GRC Kitchen Party combined student learning with cultural celebration, inviting families and community members to enjoy traditional food, live music, and a showcase of student work. This event was a true highlight, embodying the spirit of partnership and cultural appreciation.

Through our *Unity in Diversity* initiative, students worked collaboratively across grade levels to prepare lunches for the entire school community. These student-led kitchen experiences built life skills, encouraged responsibility, and created a shared sense of accomplishment. The Youth Voices group played a central role in organizing numerous school-wide events that promoted school spirit, wellness, and student leadership. Their initiatives—from the No Stress Fest to themed Spirit Weeks and acts of kindness like Valentine's Day candy grams—contributed significantly to a positive school culture.

Partnerships extended beyond our school walls through shared activities with other schools and organizations. A collaborative day with LeGallais Memorial School at the Bruce II Sports Centre allowed students to build friendships while engaging in fun, active play. Our school also proudly participated in various sports throughout the year, hosting the boys' volleyball qualifier and celebrating several notable athletic achievements, including a 4th place finish at the Provincial cross-country running event.

Finally, guest speakers from the RCMP and Western Health provided essential wellness and safety education for students across all grade levels.

These sessions supported not only student knowledge but also reflected the strong relationships we have cultivated with community health and safety partners.

In summary, this year has been marked by intentional and impactful efforts to build relationships and foster community partnerships. By creating meaningful connections within and beyond our school, we have enriched our learning environments and supported student well-being, engagement, and success in powerful ways.

Next Steps...

As we reflect on the many successes of this school year, it is clear that strong foundations have been laid across all areas of our school development plan. Moving forward, we aim to strengthen community engagement by reimagining events like the Open House to increase participation—perhaps by incorporating interactive student showcases or aligning them with other well-attended events. We will continue to foster meaningful connections between students and the broader community through initiatives like the Breakfast Program, holiday outreach, and local partnerships, while also seeking new opportunities for students to engage in service learning. Building on the success of cross-curricular and experiential learning events such as the GRC Kitchen Party and the Hunger Games Minecraft project, staff are encouraged to continue exploring and collaborating on integrated instructional practices that support deeper student engagement and understanding. In the area of student wellness and inclusion, we will expand the use of flexible learning environments, enhance sensory and common spaces, and further incorporate student voice through Youth Voices-led events and leadership initiatives. Additionally, continuing professional learning will be essential in supporting innovative classroom practices—particularly in the areas of technology integration, assessment, and inclusive education. Finally, we will continue to prioritize equity and access, ensuring that every student has opportunities to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally through responsive programming, community support, and inclusive school-wide events.