



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Saskatoon Tribal Council and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools launch First Nations fitness and wellness academy**

Officials from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and Saskatoon Tribal Council unveiled plans for a new fitness and wellness academy at E.D. Feehan Catholic High School on June 13. The miyo machihowin Academy (Cree for healthy living) is geared toward First Nations students and complements existing Indigenous language and cultural programming at the school.

“We already have academic programming in place, and being a Catholic school we help students grow spiritually too. We’ve done a lot of work over the past two years to offer better language and cultural instruction for our Indigenous learners,” said Diane Boyko, chair of the school division’s Board of Education. “Partnering with Saskatoon Tribal Council to add wellness and fitness rounds out our mix of programming really well.”

Boyko mentioned that offering First Nations students a hands-on, land-based program that includes fitness, wellness and nutrition makes another aspect of classroom instruction more culturally-relevant for them.

STC Tribal Chief Mark Arcand said, “As a result of our people being sent to residential schools, many generations have been affected; we lost our identity, culture and language. In the spirit of reconciliation, this partnership offers an extraordinary opportunity to put the Indian back in the Indian by working side by side with our partners at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools to launch this unique First Nations fitness and wellness academy that centers around elite training and incorporates our First Nations’ culture.”

“The more that students can see themselves, their culture, their Indigenous identity in their learning, the better chance we have of getting them interested in their learning,” said Boyko. “Ideally, that leads to better graduation rates for our Indigenous students.”

Thanks to a significant donation from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, professional fitness training and equipment will be available in the soon-to-be renovated small gym.

Students registered in the academy will be part of a cohort that learns together for part of the day. Courses such as English Language Arts and Social Studies will have an enhanced cultural focus and remain consistent with provincial curriculum.

Applications are being accepted for the 2018-19 school year. Application forms are available on the school’s website at [www.gscs.ca/edf](http://www.gscs.ca/edf).

- 30 -

**For more information contact:**

Derrick Kunz, Communications Consultant  
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools  
306-659-7077 | [dekunz@gscs.sk.ca](mailto:dekunz@gscs.sk.ca)

Priscilla Wolf, Communications Media Relations  
Saskatoon Tribal Council  
306-380-3935 | [pwolf@sktc.sk.ca](mailto:pwolf@sktc.sk.ca)