



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

2022-2023 CHILD SERVICES Annual Report

Jennifer Renner-Meyer
Executive Director of Child Services

A Circle of Care

St. Joseph's Indian School educates for life – mind, body, heart and spirit. Our approach embraces Catholic teaching alongside Native American spirituality and a relational worldview. The wraparound environment honors each student as an individual with specific needs that are met through the combined efforts of the students, their thiyóšpaye, our supporters and every staff member on campus. Mitákuye Oyás'ij.



Report Overview

Within the Circle of Care framework, all areas continued to offer services for every student under our care. St. Joseph's Indian School uses a wraparound services approach that is comprehensive, holistic, and centers on the child and their family. The specific needs of each student drive this approach and build on their strengths. Below, you will find key highlights from each department.





Education

Our educational philosophy is student-centered. Through a variety of instructional methods, we strive to develop a love for learning, instill habits of mind and heart, and promote faith and culture.

- Fifteen students graduated from the eighth grade in May 2023. Fifteen of those students applied for and were accepted into the high school program.
- Average daily attendance on the state report was 97%, up slightly from 96% last year. This can be compared to the South Dakota average of 56% for Native Americans in public schools over the last two years.
- Our Grade 4-8 Spring Recital featured 14 students performing musical pieces. The majority of these students were new to instruments this year.
- A school Spelling Bee, Young Author, and Reading Challenge competition took place for the second year in the spring. This voluntary event for the students supports our academic focus on reading and writing skills. Participation in the events increased this year.
- Nearly all 1-8 grade students were nominated for the Circle of Courage award during the school year. The Circle of Courage award recognizes students who have demonstrated kindness, responsibility, and interpersonal skills across all settings at SJIS.
- Four students attended SCJ Schools in Collaboration held at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston. Five SCJ schools were in attendance. Our students presented about St. Joe's, shared their cultural trip presentations, and taught the group how to make prayer ties.



Academic Testing

Program Goal:

To provide an educational program directed by students' needs.

Educational Objective:

To have at least 'one-year's growth' progress for every child and/or a remedial plan in place to meet their academic needs.

Specific Academic Measures:

MAP – Measures of Academic Progress (Reading, Math, Science)

DIBELS – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (Oral Reading Fluency)

CORE – Consortium on Reading Excellence (Vocabulary)

Smarter Balance State Standardized Testing – Direct data method for measuring core academic standards

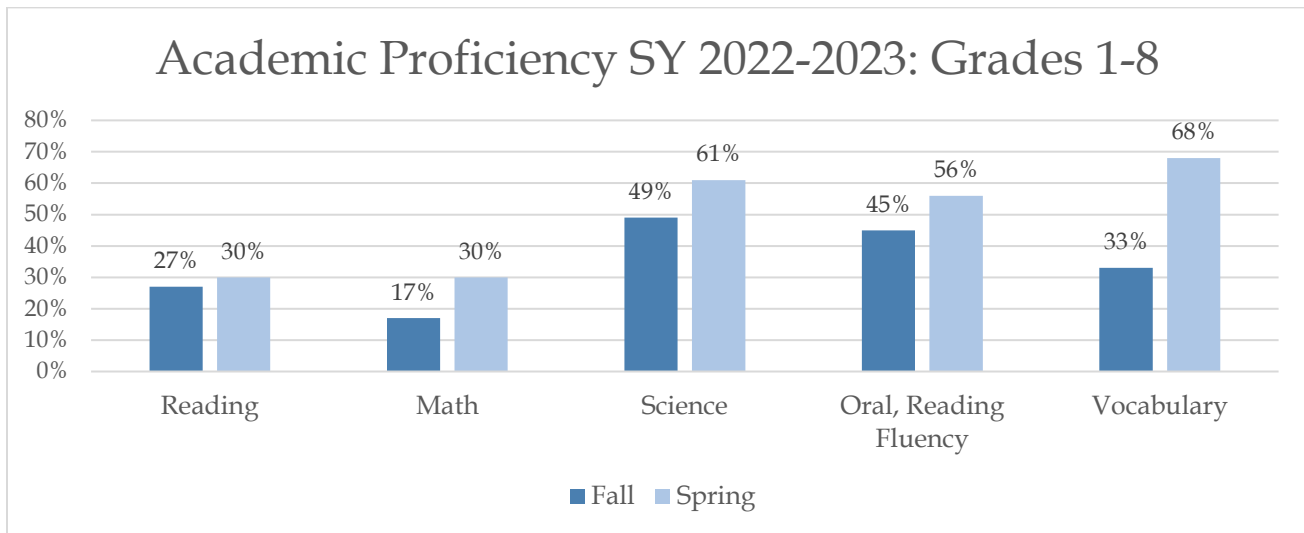


Frequency of data collection:

Three times a year for MAP, DIBELS, CORE
 Once a year for Smarter Balance

Student Population and Data Impact

Many students attending St. Joseph’s Indian School lack resources at home to expose them to concepts covered in testing, especially in the areas of science, social studies, and language arts. Additionally, students come and go throughout the year. Graphs shown below includes data for all students and tests taken; testing results were not removed if the student was not here for any of the tests. Therefore, these results are not conclusive pre-posttest situations.

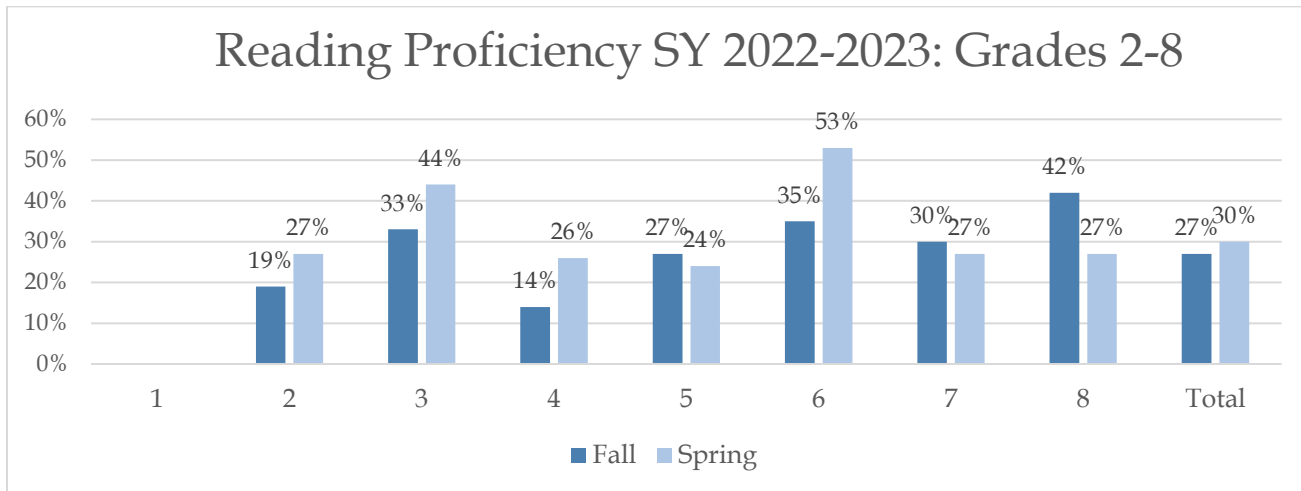


The trend lines for the school year are overall consistent or positive as we look at proficiency from the beginning of the year to the end of the year testing. Reading and Math remained consistently lower throughout the year. Due to this, a focus will be put on strengthening these areas in the coming school year.

A significant number of students who are either newly admitted or have been identified as requiring special services may not achieve proficiency. In this context, proficiency refers to students scoring at or above the benchmark for their respective subjects and grade levels. Our goal is to observe progress from an intensive level of support to a strategic level, ultimately reaching the benchmark by spring.

To better align with students' current capabilities, it's important to recognize that in the 2022-2023 school year, over 50% of the 4th-grade class consisted of newcomers. The reading skills among these new students were primarily at a kindergarten or 1st-grade level, which has a noticeable impact on their performance across all subjects.

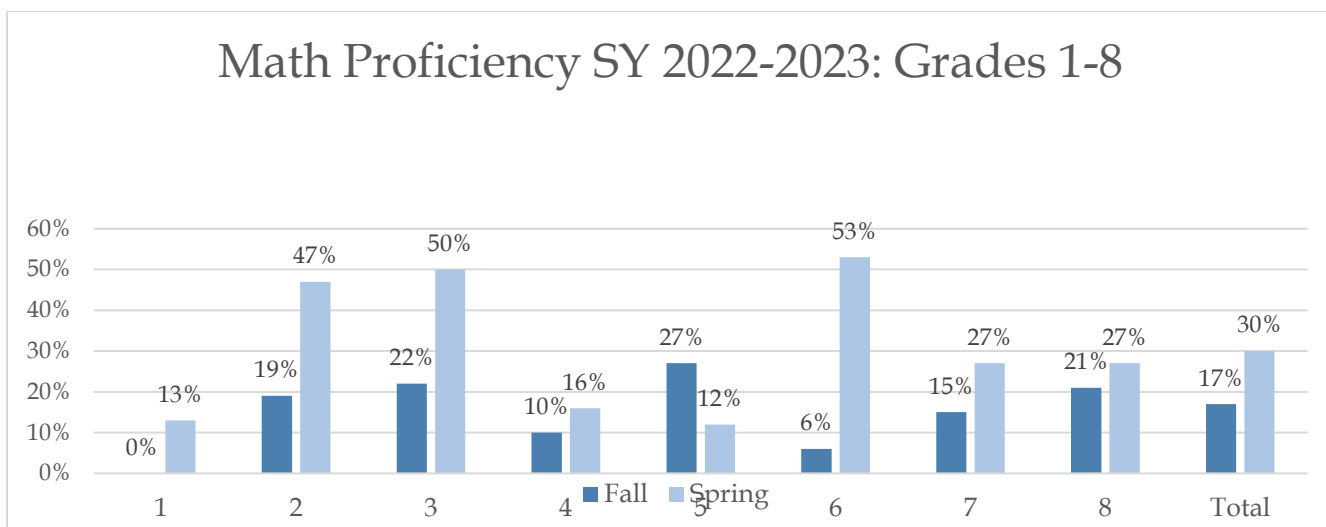
Reading



Even though the overall Reading proficiency levels were low, there was positive movement. Many students progressed from intensive to strategic or benchmark during the year. First-grade students do not take this assessment.

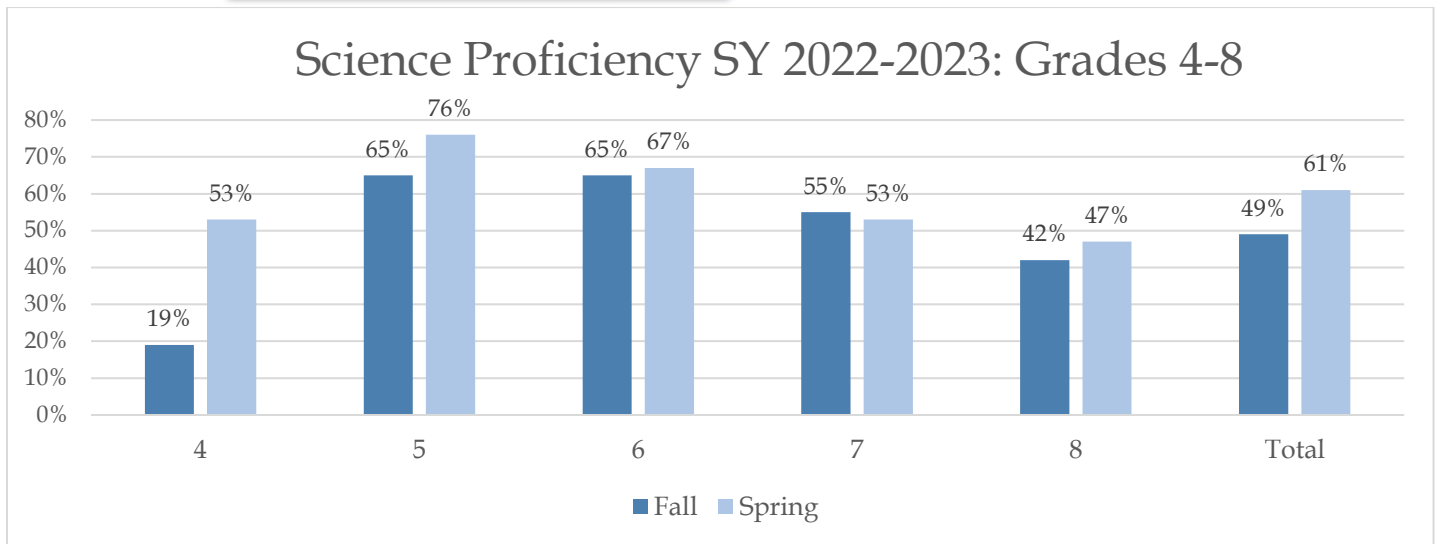


Math



As with Reading, Math also had positive movement this year. Many students progressed from intensive to strategic or benchmark during the school year.

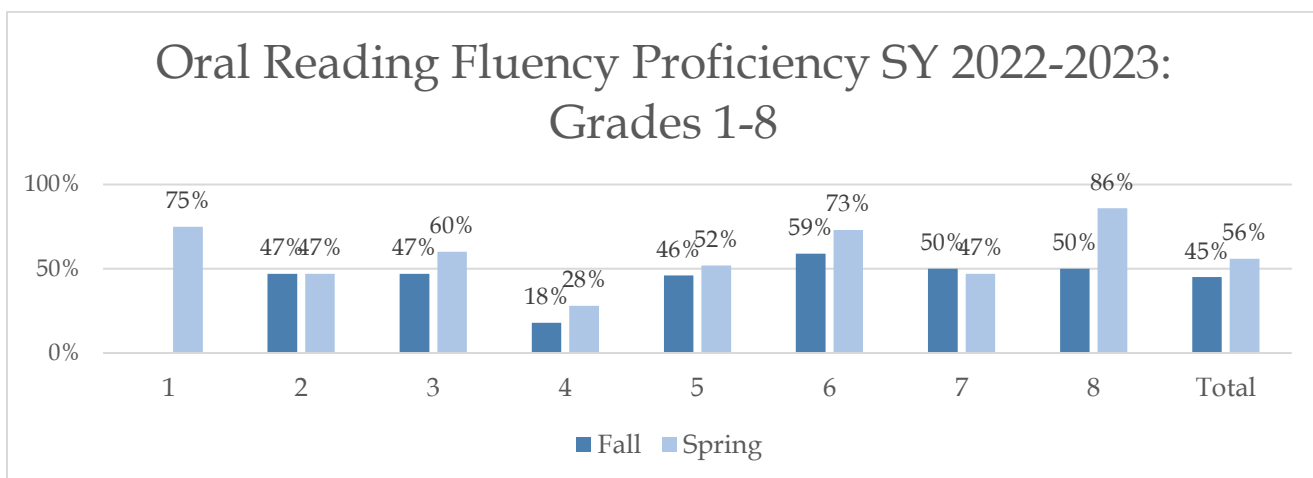
Science



Number of students testing at a proficient level who were withdrawn during the school year: Grade 4 – 1, Grade 5 – 2, Grade 6 – 2, Grade 7 – 3, Grade 8 – 4

All grades had overall gains in proficiency scores in science at the end of the year. Students start these assessments in grade 4, so there is no information for grades 1-3.

Oral Reading Fluency

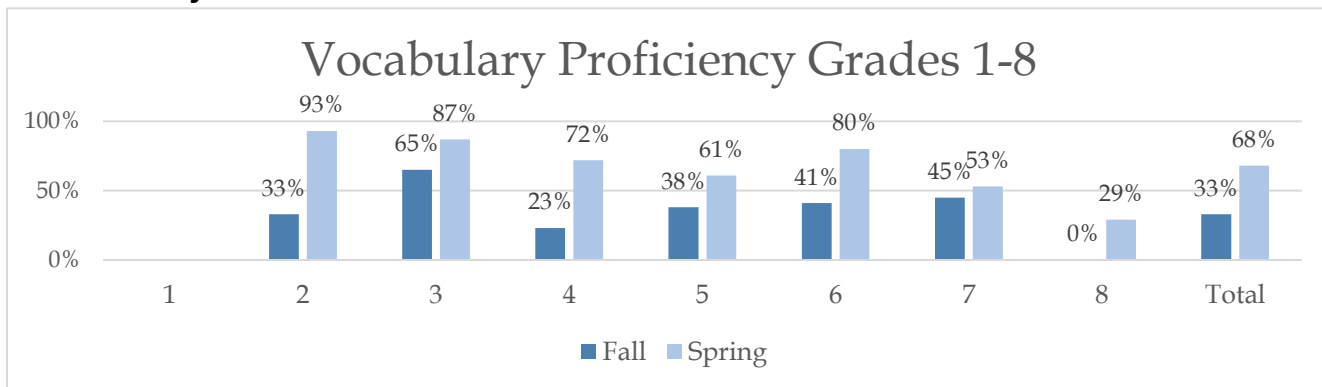


We aim to have as many fluent readers as possible by the end of fourth grade. All grades except seventh showed gains in reading proficiency. First grade went from having no students reading at proficiency during the mid-year test to having 75% of the class test at proficiency in the spring!

As previously stated, half of the fourth-grade students were new admissions this year. Among these new students and some returning ones, their reading abilities were at a kindergarten or first-grade level when the school year began. While some progress has been achieved, there is still work ahead to reach proficiency. We will continue to provide intensive interventions for these students in the upcoming school year. Additionally, three students were diagnosed with dyslexia this year, further complicating their learning challenges. We are actively implementing accommodations and adaptations to support these students.



Vocabulary



Positive gains were seen in all grade levels. Grade 1 is not assessed. Vocabulary is strongly encouraged across the curriculums. Words screened in the 7th and 8th grades are not commonly used vocabulary for our population of students. Those that are voracious readers may identify them, but not the average reader.

Academic focus for the coming year:

- A focus for reading will be higher-order thinking and application. Novel units, informational text, writing, and speaking will continue to be the focus.
- All classes will include writing components to enhance students’ writing skills and foster an understanding of different types of writing, emphasizing the inclusion of on-topic textual evidence.
- The math curriculum will shift focus from computation skills to emphasizing problem-solving and the ability to articulate the steps used. Many students tend to prefer repetitive exercises in applied math rather than the challenge of problem-solving. Therefore, our math teachers will persist in challenging students in this aspect.

Special Education Services



- 22% of students qualified for special education services, up slightly from 20% last year.
 - 50% of those students receive assistance with academics
 - 29% receive speech and language assistance
 - 21% receive both academic and speech/language support
- Support is provided through in-class assistance, pull-out programs, and the use of a resource room for additional help.
- An additional three students received academic pull-out help. These students either have not qualified for an IEP and still require assistance or are receiving help until testing is completed next year.
- Three students were diagnosed with dyslexia and seven more were determined to have dyslexic tendencies according to the screening measures. All received extra instruction for that purpose.
- All eighth-grade students returned to the general education classrooms throughout the school year to prepare for high school.
- Seven students received occupational therapy assistance during the school day.
- Two students received vision therapy weekly at Visions in Sioux Falls

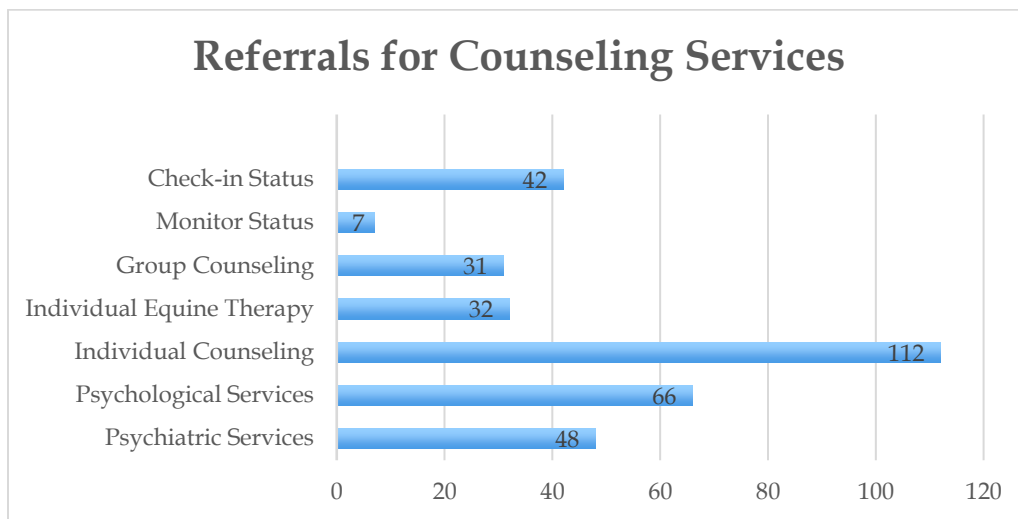




Counseling Services

Our counseling philosophy is to support students through a relationship-based, holistic approach to become strong, self-determined, resourceful and resilient.

The Family Service Counselors support students through individual and group counseling services. We are fortunate to have psychological and psychiatric services available on campus as well.



The graph reflects students in services at the end of the school year.

While counseling goals vary, these are the most common:

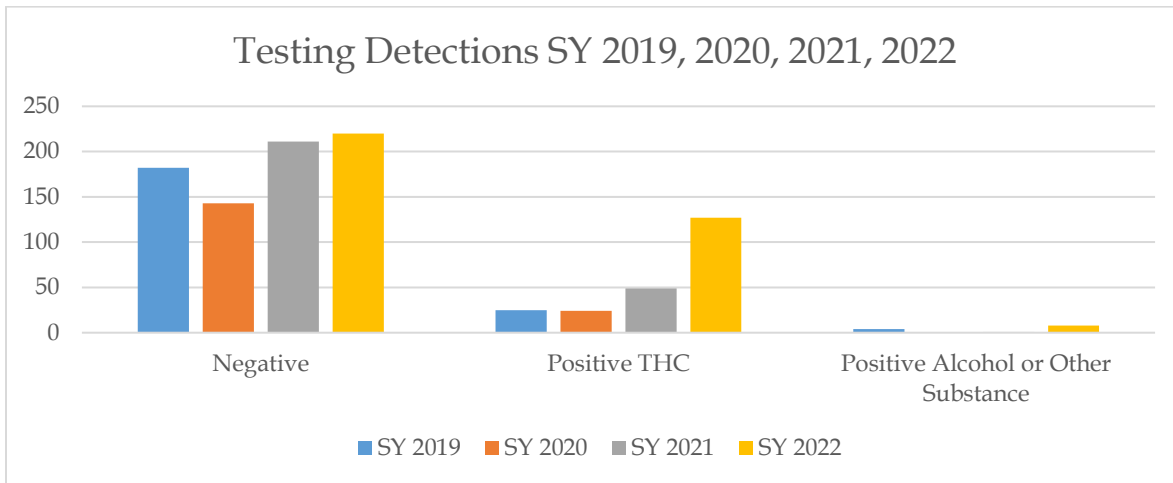
Reasons for Referrals

	1 st -3 rd *	4 th -6 th *	7 th -8 th	HS
1 st	Coping Skills	Social Skills	Family	Coping Skills
2 nd	Impulse Control	Family	Coping Skills	Family
3 rd	Family	Peer Relationships	Mood Management	Mood Management

*(excluding the goal of acclimating as a new student)

- The percentage of students who are prescribed psychotropic/controlled medication was 29%. This is a decrease from 36% during the 2021-2022 school year.
 - 4.83% of new students came on psychotropic medication
 - 56% of new students came with mental health records or a counseling referral
- The Counseling Department regularly uses cultural practices within counseling sessions and student interactions.

- Substance abuse services
 - 35 students took part in in a drug and alcohol assessment this year
 - 35 students completed education/diversion classes as a result of their assessment
 - 24 of those students didn't require additional services
 - 11 of those students moved to the next phase and completed intensive outpatient services
 - 4 students attended in-patient treatment
 - 3 completed successfully and returned to St. Joe's
 - 1 did not complete treatment and did not return to campus



Prevention

- All 1-8 grade students receive a semester of substance abuse prevention during guidance class.



- 4th - 8th grade students can participate in a voluntary Red Path group focused on drug and alcohol prevention strategies. The group also enables students to work through stressors related to living in a home where someone has an addiction. These groups meet once a week and are split by age and gender.
- Additional vape education services have been added to the guidance curriculum due to increased vaping use among 6th-12th grade students.

Equine Therapy

- 1-8 grade students received a semester of equine interaction during guidance class (40 minutes, 1x per week). Next year, this will be doubled with 80-minute guidance classes.
- The long-awaited Equine Therapy Center opened for student use in August of 2023!



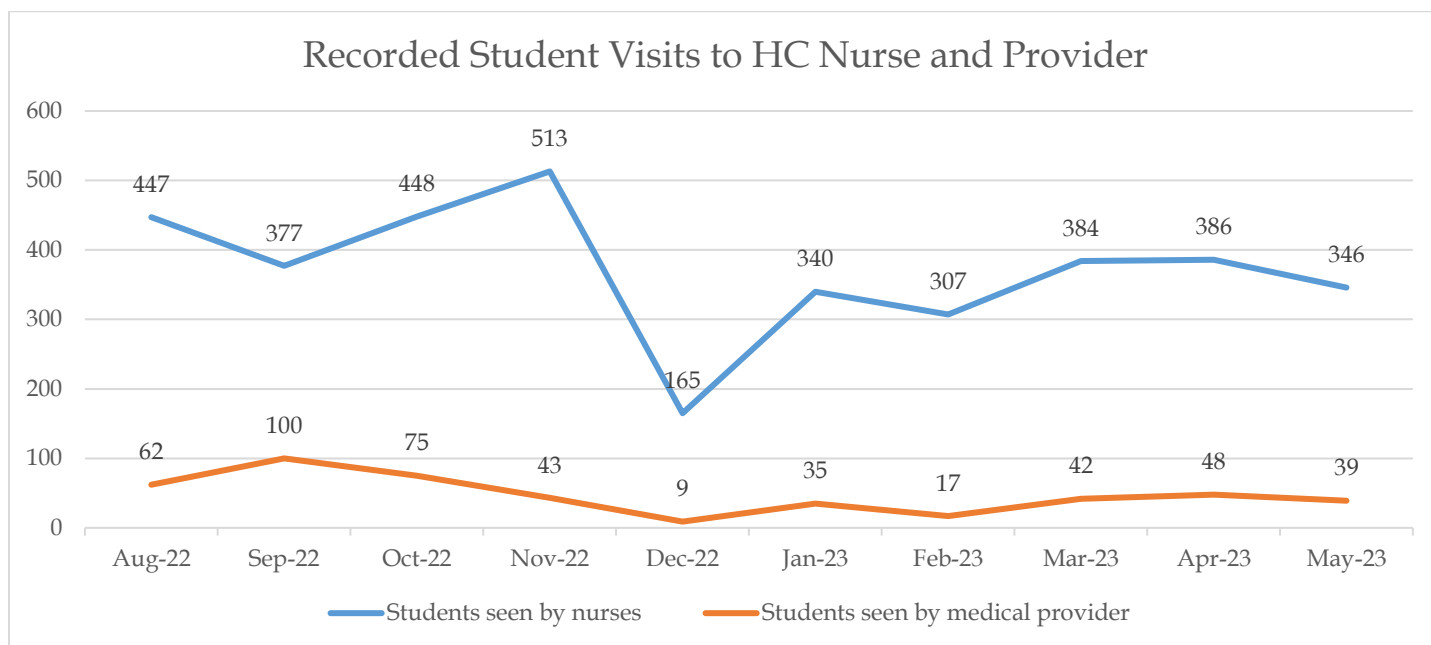


Health and Wellness

Our health and wellness philosophy is to safely meet the healthcare needs of all of our students. We provide on-site health and wellness services and facilitate access to specialized care.



Our Health Center staff provide for many student needs in a 24/7 environment. The clinic is open Monday through Friday, with a nurse on call whenever students are on campus. The Health Center supports students with medical complexities such as asthma/allergies, dermatological concerns, cerebral palsy, diabetes mellitus, urology, gastroenterology, orthopedics, as well as injuries/surgeries.



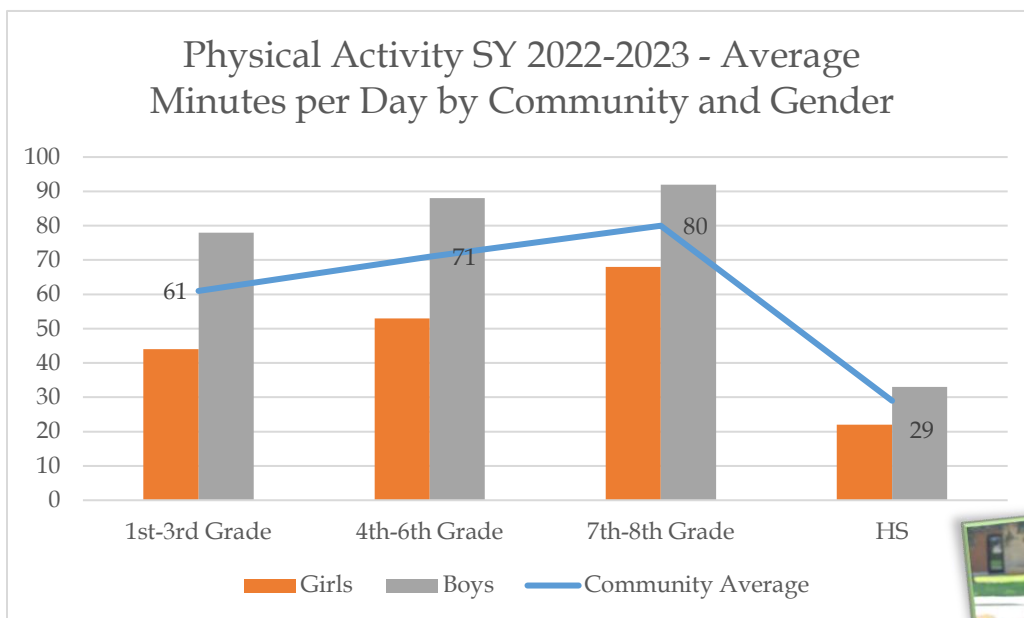
SY 2022-2023: Each student received approximately 3 visits to the Medical Provider and 21 visits to the nursing team (sum of visits / average enrollment)

- There were 3,714 student/nurse visits during regular office hours throughout the school year, a significant increase of 1,347 visits from the previous year. This increase can be attributed to the ongoing provider-nurse relationship, which promotes the use of guided standing order sets and frequent student-to-nurse rechecks.
- There were 470 student/provider visits during the school year, a slight decrease of 54 compared to the previous year. This reduction is a result of nurses utilizing standing orders, allowing providers to check in with nursing staff and students during these standing order sessions rather than conducting full provider visits. This reallocation of provider time enables them to focus on more complex and detailed student healthcare needs.

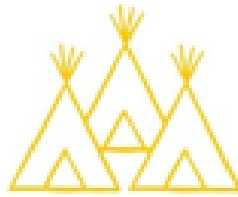
- Student sick stays increased from 302 last year to 497 this year. This averages out to approximately 3 students per day. The increase can be attributed to a significant amount of cough/cold/fever and strep throat/influenza both on campus, in the local community, and statewide.
- A focus on student oral health resulted in increased education for students and Houseparents, toothbrushes being automatically changed out after each break, and oral hygiene kits added to the bookmobile.
- Fulfilling the Federal Trust Responsibility and Native American Health Equity:
 - Federal Trust Responsibility outlines the obligation of the United States to ensure the health and well-being of Native Americans. The National Indian Health Board states that true fulfillment is fully funded healthcare, meaning it's free to patients and well-resourced.
 - When students arrive at SJIS, most lack preventative healthcare, relying instead on urgent care.
 - Most students are eligible for Medicaid, and while that helps cover some healthcare costs, not all necessary treatments are approved for coverage or covered at full cost for treatment.
 - SJIS provides and coordinates all medically necessary prevention, maintenance, and treatment to students while they attend. If Medicaid does not cover healthcare services, then SJIS takes responsibility for the remaining cost.
 - In conclusion, SJIS is doing our part for Native Americans to ensure the Federal Trust Responsibility for healthcare needs is fulfilled to set students up for the same positive health and life outcomes as other students nationwide.



Student physical activity is a health and wellness focus.



1st-8th grades kept average minutes per day of physical activity per student at CDC recommendations of 60min/day.



Residential Life



Our residential philosophy is to develop collaborative relationships with students and families using a strength-based, developmental approach that teaches life skills and fosters lifelong learning through the values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

- A social-emotional learning unit is taught in the 1-8 grade homes once a week. The Second Step program is evidenced-based and builds upon the knowledge from year to year. The program uses pre and post-tests to rate student's progress in areas like emotion

recognition, understanding others, social problem-solving, and self-management.

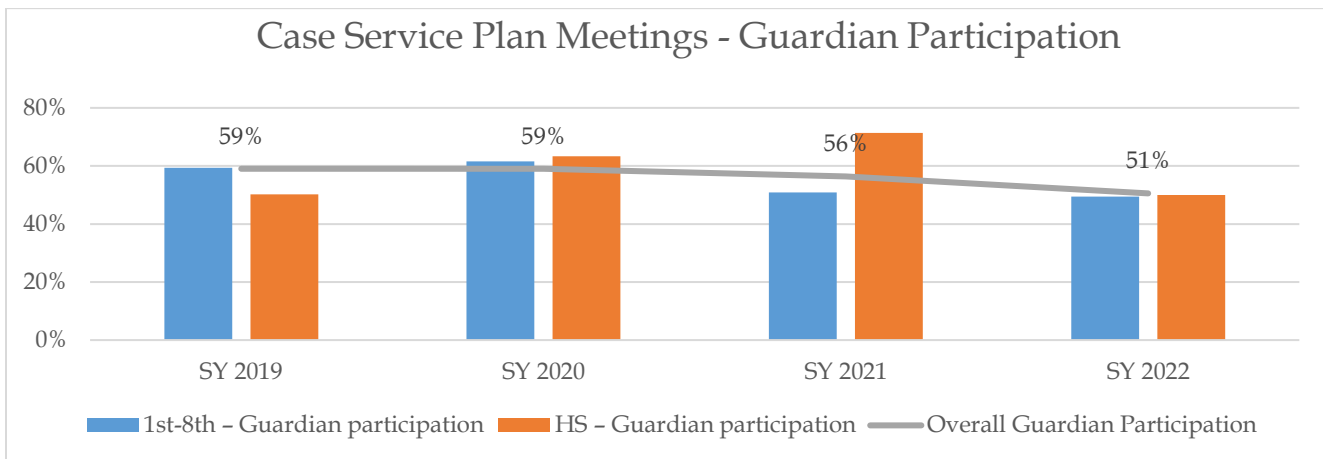


- 31% of the student population are matched in our Children Count mentor program. The mentor program focuses on students with fewer family contact opportunities and checkouts. There are 56 students on the waiting list.

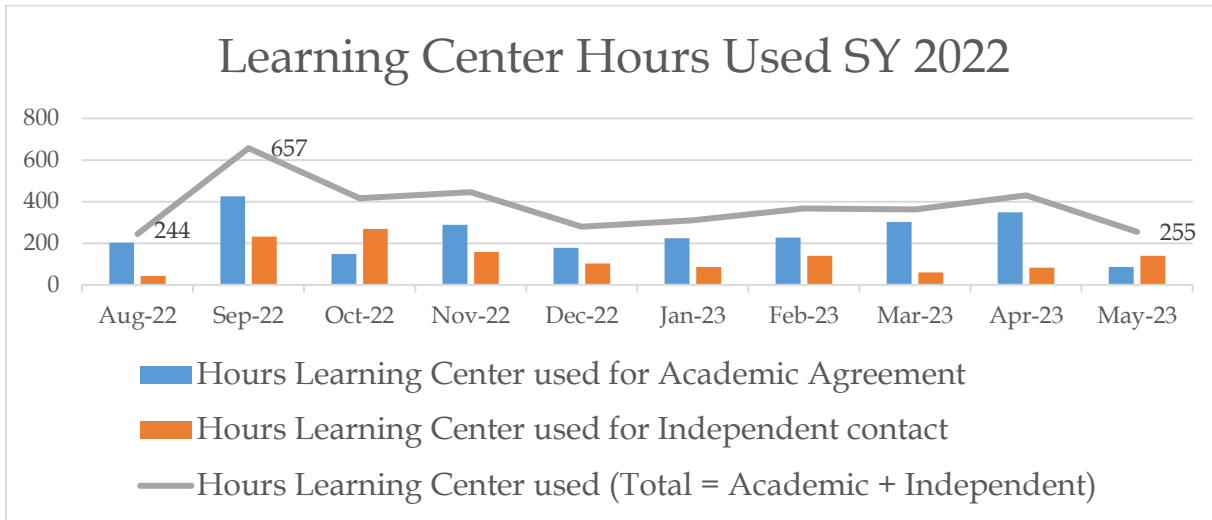
- Case Service Plan meetings are held for each student once a semester. This is a time to talk about a student's overall well-being in all areas – academically, socially, spiritually, and physically. Parent/guardians are encouraged to attend in person or via phone.



Case Service Plan Meetings - Guardian Participation



- The overall GPA for the HS program was 2.4. This is down slightly from 2.8 the prior year.
- The Learning Center continues to be a busy place for the high school students, with a total of 3,484 visits to the tutor.



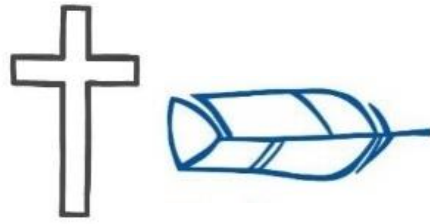
- High school students take part in a Belongingness Survey twice a year to measure their engagement in both SJIS and Chamberlain High School. When students were asked if they feel like they are part of St. Joe’s, the cumulative total was a score of 4.25 out of 5. Regarding Chamberlain High School, the response was 4.01 out of 5.
- The High School Program had six students graduate. All six of the students plan to attend Vo-tech programs in South Dakota this fall.



Transition Specialist

- 90% of the high school students participated in visits with higher education or military during the school year.
- The Transition Specialist maintains regular contact and interaction with our SJIS high school program graduates an average of 12 times per month. These interactions include in-person visits, virtual meetings, sending care packages by mail, and communicating through social media.
- Over the last four years, 20 students have graduated from SJIS. 90% (18 out of 20) of those graduates are employed, in the military, or pursuing higher education. Two of the graduates were unable to be reached at the time of this report.





Mission Integration

The Mission Integration department focuses on the development and integration of both religion and Native American culture.

Spirituality

*Founded by the Priests of the Sacred Heart, our spiritual philosophy is to provide students with a rich base of Catholic faith and Native American tradition upon which they can draw for a lifetime, finding *Thunǰkášila* in all things.*



Faith Declaration



- Among our student body, 54% identify as Catholic. This marks a decrease compared to previous years. Notably, this percentage remains high among our older students, but the trend shifts in the younger age groups, particularly in grades 2 through 4. This decline may be linked to the absence of a sacramental preparation class in 2021. It's also possible that some families do not identify their children as Catholic until they have received the sacraments, contributing to this decline.
- 23 students received Sacraments last spring.

Religious Education

Religious Education strives to meet the students at their developmental level, building on knowledge and ability from year to year.

Youngest students

- Focus on learning common bible stories; discussing comparisons between the Christian creation story and the Lakota creation story
- Learn to pray the rosary during their religion class

Middle students

- Take part in Altar server training and serve during Masses
- Look at the life of Jesus through The Chosen series. The students are able to better understand the context of the time Jesus was living and see Jesus portrayed as a gentle leader who wants us to become the best we can be.
- Write prayers to be shared on the SJIS Facebook page

Older students

- Serve as lectors at Mass
- Lead prayer petitions at quarterly prayer services
- Complete reflections on the Mass readings of the day
- Prepare their prayers for Inipi (Sweat Lodge), and reflect on their Inipi experiences



Culture

Our cultural philosophy is to celebrate and embrace our students' Native American heritage through the study and practice of language, ceremony, dance and other activities.

Lakota Language

- Placards added to all bathrooms in Lakota
- The 1-8 grade students continue to lead the Lakota flag song and the Lord's Prayer in Lakota every morning for announcements.



Ceremony, Dance, and Dress

- Our Wačhipi (Powwow) returned to an in-person event this year. 143 students danced in their regalia for the occasion.
 - 12 Inipis took place this year. Middle school boys continue to have the highest attendance, with an average of 10 boys.
 - Over the past two years, the focus was on ribbon skirts for the girls. This year, all boys now have a ribbon shirt as well.
 - Staff are also wearing ribbon skirts to honor students on important days or events



Sacred Site Trips, Activities, and Reflections

- High School students took part in the first-ever Wičhóni Wašté (Good Life) events this year.
 - In the fall of 2022, freshmen and sophomores went to the Badlands for their "Peaks and Valleys" retreat to explore life's ups and downs through critical reflection on themselves and their purpose in life. The goal was to offer a day of community, culture, and relationship building.
 - In the spring of 2023, juniors and seniors traveled to Bear Butte and Black Elk Peak to take part in their retreat, titled "The Summit". This was a reflective journey as seniors looked back on those who supported them and their time at the school, while juniors reflected on their own support systems and considered their future leadership and senior year.
- The 7th and 8th grade students took part in a Buffalo Harvest in the fall. Elders lead the students as they witness the buffalo's sacrifice for the community's benefit and the practice of using every part of the buffalo to avoid waste. This ritual draws parallels between the buffalo's sacrifice and the idea of God's sacrifice for humanity, emphasizing the theme of selflessness and love for others.



- The 7th grade boys and girls took part in the annual 7th Grade Cultural Trip to sacred sites in the Midwest. This continues to be a significant event in the student's St. Joe's experience.

Other areas of focus

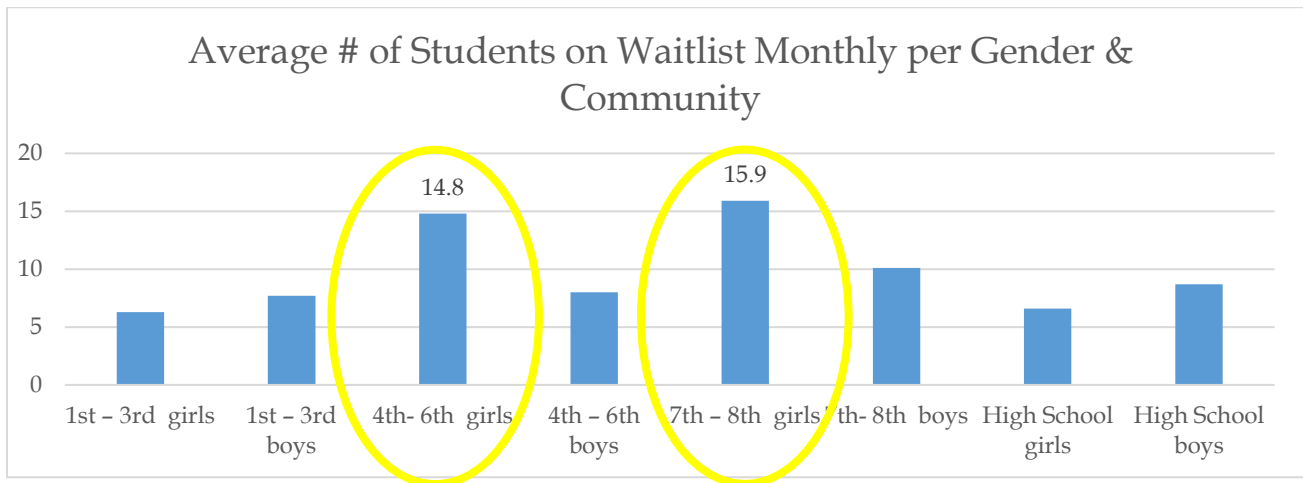
Admissions

The Admissions process seeks to match student applicants with available services and openings. Information of note includes:

Student applications are sent out per parent/guardian request.

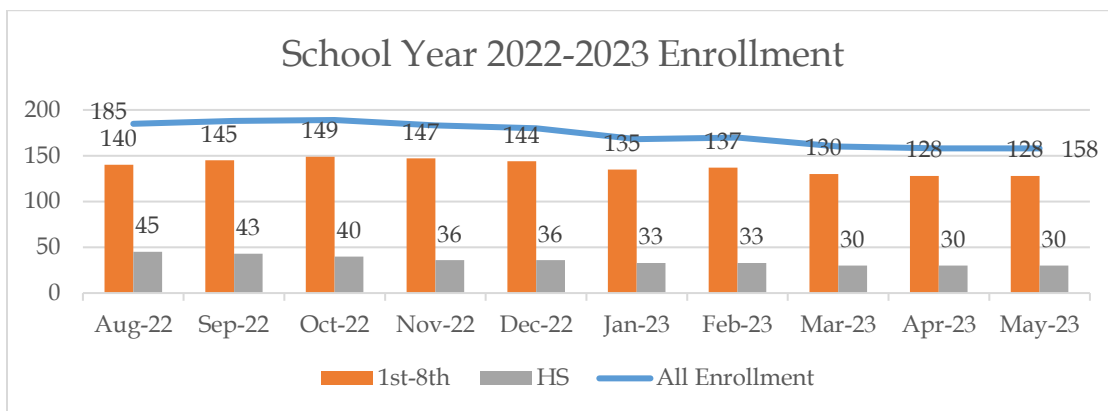
Applications Sent	Applications Received
390	94

= 24% Response Rate

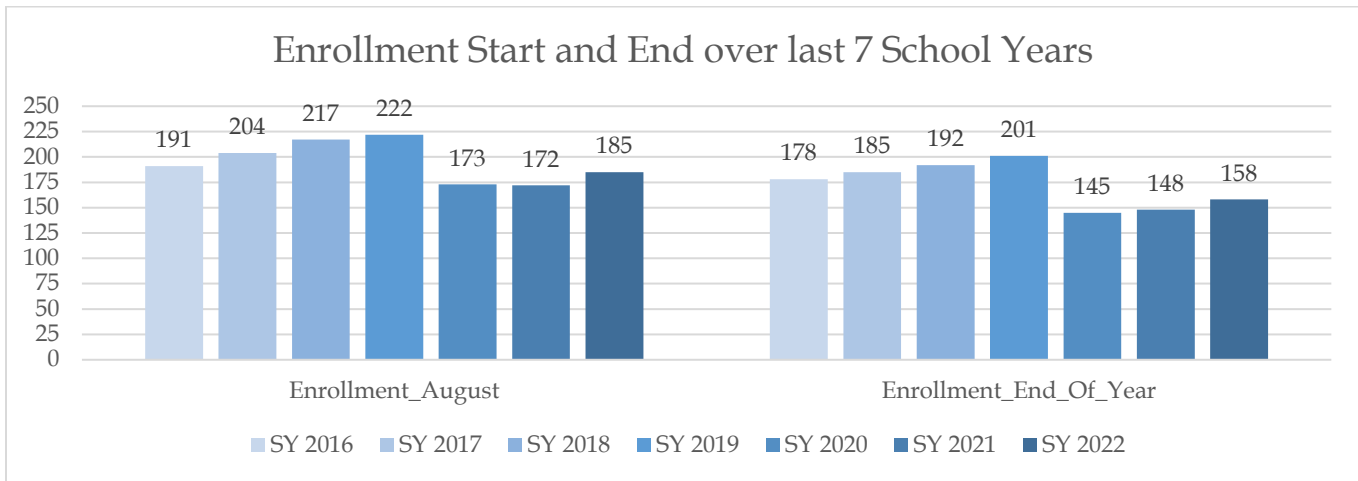


- An online application is now available on the sjiskids.org website for families to access

Enrollment



The school year began with 185 students enrolled. As is typical, numbers fluctuated throughout the year. We ended the year with 158 students.



Enrollment continues to steadily increase following COVID. The growth rate is very similar to that seen in prior years.

Alumni

The Alumni program was moved under the Mission Integration department in the fall of 2022.

- 164 scholarships were awarded during the 2022-2023 school year totaling \$213,970.
- Assistance was provided to alumni or families of our current students through food boxes, funeral boxes, and clothing from the Thrift Store, assistance with rent and utilities, gas vouchers, etc.
- The Bookmobile visited communities in South Dakota again this year, handing out 17,000 books to children and adults. 68 alumni visited the bookmobile this year.
- A focus will be put on increasing alumni engagement and interaction during the coming school year.



Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of parents/guardians. The group meets twice during the school year to discuss issues relevant to our students and families.

- The September meeting consisted of updates on Native Hope and St. Joe's podcasts, admissions, equine therapy, and an interactive demonstration on teaching language during summer day camp.
- In March, PAC members toured Chamberlain High School and received updates on 1-8 grade academics, cultural interventions in counseling, and events such as the buffalo harvest and Wičhóni Wašté retreat. Members also gave suggestions on student enrollment and family engagement.



Conclusion

This report highlights many activities that took place at St. Joseph's Indian School throughout the 2022-2023 school year. We remain committed to providing our students and their families with the highest quality educational experience possible.

Looking ahead to the 2023-2024 school year, our focus will be on:

- Continue to strategically expand enrollment by aligning the unique strengths of SJIS with the specific needs and aspirations of students and their families, fostering a mutually beneficial educational experience.
- To improve academic outcomes by implementing evidence-based teaching strategies and personalized learning approaches that address the unique needs of our student population.
- To further develop our equine therapy program to promote healing, personal growth, and cultural connection among students.
- To enhance overall program effectiveness and accountability by developing clear and comprehensive logic models to guide planning, implementation, and evaluation processes across all Child Services programs.

