

FFHS hockey academy now up and running

By **Nicholas Donaldson**
Staff writer
ndonaldson@fortfrances.com

Some local students now are able to say hockey is their favourite subject at school.

The Rainy River District School Board's inaugural hockey skills academy has begun, with 28 Grade 7 and 8 students at Fort Frances High School (10 girls and 18 boys) enrolled for the 2017-18 school year.

The academy runs Oct. 3-March 8, allowing registered students to receive structured hockey training during regular school hours in an effort to enhance both academic and athletic achievement.

Sanctioned by Hockey Cana-

da, classes consist of hour-long practices every Tuesday and Thursday at the Ice For Kids Arena, as well as an hour of dryland training once a week.

The local program is modelled after the very successful one operated by the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, with academies in Dryden, Ignace, Kenora, Red Lake, and Sioux Lookout.

"The curriculum for the Hockey Canada Skills focuses on skill development, both on individual technical and tactical skill development," instructor Jeff Ogden told the Times in an e-mail.

"We really work on the fundamental skills that players need to improve on to be

successful at whatever level of hockey they are competing at," he added.

Over the summer, Ogden and the program's other instructor, Chris Sinclair, attended the Hockey Canada Skills Academy training session in Ottawa.

During the two-and-a-half-day session, they had the opportunity to listen to a number of presenters, as well as participate in sessions on and off the ice to prepare them for running the academy here.

"This program has been very successful in other school boards and are we are looking for similar results at Fort Frances High School," Ogden noted.

The hockey academy aims to improve student achievement



Instructor Jeff Ogden had the attention of his class as he explained some drills last Thursday during a Hockey Canada Skills Academy class at the Ice For Kids Arena. This is the first year of the program being run by the Rainy River District School Board, which gives Grade 7 and 8 students at FFHS a chance to gain some extra hockey training during school hours.

and engagement in the classroom by providing a unique course that helps them stay interested in school.

"We know that physical education plays a large role in a student's mental health and we are looking to this program to tap into student interests to improve their mental health," Ogden said.

Although the academy takes place during school hours, participating students are not missing any academic work as the

lessons make up their phys. ed. time.

As well, the other students are participating in their own phys. ed. program while the hockey academy is running, meaning no students are missing out on any academic or athletic time the rest of the class is receiving.

Ogden noted no games are scheduled in the program as the hockey academy focuses solely on practice and skill development.

This means the program is available for any student regardless of their skill level.

As Ogden noted, however, only one student is not enrolled in hockey this season, with the rest being members of a minor hockey association.

But overall, every student in the hockey academy is receiving training time, better skill development, and motivation for academic achievement as they learn to balance both academics and athletics at school.



In a different sort of "classroom," a couple of the 28 students enrolled in the academy practised some hockey drills last Thursday morning at the Ice For Kids Arena.

—Nicholas Donaldson photos



PROUDLY PRESENTS

Glass Tiger

Thursday October 19 - Townshend Theatre
Doors open at 6:30pm. Performance at 7:00pm