



327 South Woodard Avenue – Absarokee, Montana 59001

[www.absarokee.k12.mt.us](http://www.absarokee.k12.mt.us)

## Home of the Huskies

Issue # 4

December 2021

### Superintendent's Report & Lil Husky News *by Meredith Feddes*

Dear Students, Staff and Community,

The school year is a quarter done and we have had great things happening at school. The students have been making progress towards meeting grade level standards. The elementary is using standards-based grading and following content standards for lessons. The junior high is working towards these same goals. We have found that if we start something with students at the elementary and continue it through junior high and high school, we will have success. Our staff, as so many across the nation, should be commended for the efforts they have put forth. Because of COVID, our staff members have learned how to teach virtually when necessary, worn masks while teaching, taught virtually and in-person simultaneously, handled our comprehensive status, dealt with ever-changing rules, and finally implemented new programs and processes through the Literacy Grant. Our staff has demonstrated strength, determination and value to our students and the community daily.

The staff of Absarokee schools has taken every obstacle that has arisen over the last four years and worked through them together. The Literacy Grant that was written and granted was the brainchild of Heidi Gunderson and benefitted every staff member and student of the Absarokee Schools. We have worked to write goals that drive our daily decisions to educate students to their fullest extent. Staff members have taken additional courses to teach and help with testing strategies. Our new staff members are either fully certified, provisionally certified (because of their previous schooling), or on emergency authorization to get fully certified in the next three years. Our district, like many rural districts, have had difficulty finding staff members to fill open positions. We will most likely continue to see educator shortages for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to: a lack of students obtaining education degrees, a lack of desire to argue with parents and communities who disagree with educational practices, better pay in other fields, and retirement due to fatigue of all the demands of teaching.

We value our staff and would like to hear from families when things are going well and when you appreciate the education your child receives. We understand that there may be things you don't agree with and when this happens, the following process should be followed. Start by visiting with the staff member involved with the problem/disagreement. If there is a resolution to problem, then nothing further should occur. If you did not find a resolution together, the next step is to visit with the building administrator and staff member about the problem. If a resolution occurs at this stage, nothing further needs to happen. Should resolution not be reached, you can meet with the staff member, building administrator and the superintendent. If a resolution is reached at this stage, you have completed the process. However, if you do not meet a resolution at this step, you are then able to bring your problem before the school board. If these steps are not followed, there can be issues with the administrators or board members having prior knowledge of information and that is a violation of due process. Please follow the chain of command, so our students and staff are afforded due process.

Students are getting back into the normal routines of the school year with athletics, academics and activities. We are humbled and proud of the efforts of our football and volleyball teams. In both sports, we had veteran athletes step up into leadership roles, as well as younger athletes that had to step into roles they should have had more time to develop. Both teams had two seniors, a junior and the rest of the team was sophomores and freshmen. This looks good for our future development. These individuals took the hand dealt to them and played with integrity and pride for the name on the front of their jerseys. This has set the stage for our winter and spring seasons. We have had students working hard in other activities as well. The FFA group attended nationals at the end of October and John Deere Ag Days in the middle of November. There has been success with events such as Mechanics, Sales, Horse Evaluation and Agri-Science. We have had some super efforts from students to keep the concession stand open in the fall. This is a difficult task when our workers are also participating in the activities, yet they make it happen. If you have a student in activities, your help is encouraged as well. This helps the students earn funds for their groups.

The School Board continues to work on policies, which are everchanging, with the legislature and new federal and state laws. They also have been working on updating facilities, curriculum, the school wellness policy, strategic planning, all while trying to understand standards and grading procedures. There have been many committee meetings this fall. Meetings will continue, as our board is working to understand the needs of the district, to set a 5-year plan, and to see what the Sandstone will develop into. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Board members who volunteer their time and efforts for the students of our community.

Positive community relations are a top priority and we want to keep stakeholders well informed and up to date on what is going on at Absarokee Schools. There is so much going on - we encourage you to read the newsletter, visit our school website, and Absarokee Huskies Facebook page to stay up to date. Communication is vital to the continued success of our schools. If you would prefer to schedule a visit or call the school, you are welcome to do this as well. Face to face communications are the best way to share successes and resolve issues. We

look forward to these conversations with you. We continue to work on the Strategic 5-year plan and would love to have community involvement in this process. Please call if you are willing to meet with others and help us develop this plan. I cannot thank you enough for the great community support of our school. We have a wonderful community, and together we are creating fantastic kids.

### **JH/HS Principal** *by Cameron Barber*

Everyone says this every year, but I cannot believe it is November! The holiday season is fast upon us and it won't be long till Christmas songs take over. The first quarter came to an end and we had some great success. The students worked hard and it showed in all of their GPAs. We had a lot of students that were over a 3.0 GPA

- 6th grade- 16/18
- 7th grade- 12/12
- 8th grade- 22/25
  - All Junior High Students- 50/55= 90%
- 9th grade- 14/14
- 10th grade- 19/22
- 11th grade- 8/8
- 12 Grade- 12/14
  - All High School Students- 53/56- 94%

In 6th grade through 12th grade we had 103 students out of 111 have a GPA of 3.0 or better. That is 92% of our students. I am very proud of how hard that they worked and I hope that they take pride in their accomplishments and work to do just as good or better in the 2nd quarter.

We had seven seniors and one junior participate in a career and technical education fair in Red Lodge. There were different types of alternative post-secondary schools and job options at the fair. Some of these included the armed forces, welding, forest service, baking, linemen, electrical, sports officiating, health care, and so much more. The students received a bingo card that they got signed as they visited each specialty. IT was great for some of our students to see some different post-secondary programs that are not a traditional four-year school.

FFA has been very active and busy the last month. Mr. Yates took 16 students to the Nile competition in Billings, while they were there they competed in livestock judging and sales. He also took 27 students to Ag Days in Bozeman, as well as taking four seniors to Indianapolis, Indiana for FFA Nationals. To see how the students did make sure to read the FFA section.

From the school's literacy grant, Wayne Callendar has been visiting the school once a month to work with staff. He has been focusing on gradual release teaching, identifying clear learning targets, and making sure our pathways to interventions are in place for tier 2 and 3 students. He has been a tremendous help, and a great resource for our school to work with.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday season, and get to spend some much-needed time with your families during our time off of school.

### **Board of Trustees News** *by Kayce Arthur, Board Chairperson*

Greetings from your Absarokee Board of Trustees!

As we head into the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, the school continues to work on keeping students on track with education through grade level standards, extracurricular activities aplenty and all the other happenings that arise as we are full steam into the second quarter. It has been a good fall and we are proud of the students work in the classroom; as well as, their integrity and class through the fall sports season and extracurricular activities. Husky Pride was on display in full force!

November found your board of trustees working on the Absarokee School District 5 Year Strategic Plan by holding a community crossover event on November 1. We appreciated the community members, staff, families and students that gave of their time to share their thoughts about what both the strengths and weaknesses of the school are; as well as, where they would like to see the Absarokee School District in the next 3 to 5 years. We will be meeting again on November 30 to work on goal areas that were identified through consensus from the initial meeting, on what the district's focus should be in the upcoming years. This strategic plan process is not something that is developed overnight and it is one of our goals this year to work on getting a plan in place. All strategic planning meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to come roll up your sleeves and work with us as we plan for the future of the Absarokee Schools.

In the last newsletter I shared what a school board trustee's role is, this month I would like to spend a little time on some of the commitments we take on as trustees. Of course, the one most people are familiar with is the monthly school board meeting, which is typically the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted. We also all serve on committees that help with certain aspects of the oversight of the school. Currently the Absarokee Board of Trustees has the following committees: Negotiations (Kayce Arthur-Chair), Curriculum-Literacy (Mike Pasecznyk-Chair), Technology (Justine Dawson-Chair) and Building-Facilities (Josh Royce-Chair). These committees each meet several times a year and on an as needed basis. If you ever have questions regarding any of these areas, please feel free to reach out to the chair, the school or join us for a committee meeting. At the moment, we also have a group working with the Sandstone Preservation Committee and a Wellness Coalition. As mentioned before, the entire board is in the process of strategic planning and annual goal setting. Last month when I was listing what I was thankful for when it comes to the school, I was remiss in not mentioning the board of trustees. I

appreciate the many hours that they give each month as they serve in a volunteer capacity to help oversee the district's affairs, students' education, personnel and properties. I am grateful to have these individuals to work with and I thank them for their dedication and commitment to the Absarokee School District.

As the holiday's approach we wish each of you a season filled with loved ones, opportunities to make memories, health, happiness and good tidings. Thank you for your support of the Absarokee School District in 2021 and we look forward to working together in 2022. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours!

### **Stillwater Valley FFA** *by Bailey Kornick, Reporter*

November was a busy month for the Stillwater Valley Chapter. We have our chapter members involved with John Deere Ag Expo and fundraising. November 11th- 13th we took twenty-seven kids to Bozeman, including Mr. Yates, Ms. Hamel, and our bus driver Brian Young. The kids compete in several competitions.

In Agricultural Sales, the students gain experience in communications, building a sales presentation, and marketing agricultural products. There is a team problem and an individual sale. Our sales team was; Keagan Sandlin, Nila Dawson, Tandy Planicheck, and Bailey Kornick. The team placed 2nd and Bailey Kornick placed 1st overall.

Horse judging students learned more about equine science and ranking horses. This year in horse evaluation, they judged 4 different classes and gave reasons on two of them. They placed their classes according to how they looked, walked, and what their backs looked like. When giving reasons, they made sure to talk fluently, not look at their clipboard, and maintain eye contact. The Junior team consisted of; Alli Noble, Amber Peterson, Logan Young, Wyatt Kornick, Julianna Feddes and William Barnett. The Junior team placed 1st with Alli Noble placing 3rd and Amber Peterson placing 5th. The senior team placed 17<sup>th</sup>, and their team consisted of Saige Nye, Shalya Russel, Haylee Baver, Braelynn Williams, and Justin Heimer.

A new competition that students competed in was a tractor driving seminar and contest. This taught students about safety and gave them the ability to practice what they learned at the seminar in competition. Colt drove a small tractor with a loader. He weaved through 3 cones then had to take a football off of a stand. He then weaved back through the cones and dropped the football into a target and had to try to hit the center. Trevor drove a mini excavator. He knocked a tennis ball off a cone and then flipped one tire over and stacked another one on top of it. Gunnar backed a small tractor onto a trailer and then off it again. Logan drove a skid steer and went down an alleyway, picked up a pallet and then turned around and placed the pallet as close to a cone as possible. Then back down the alleyway again to where he started. The team placed 8th. Tandy Planichek, Nila Dawson, Bailey Kornick, Haylee Baver, and Keagan Sandlin all competed in job interviews. Each person built a resume, cover letter and picked a job that they would like to apply for after high school. At the contest they reviewed their resumes and cover letters, and then 2 judges asked them a series of questions just like an actual job interview. All of our members did very well in the job interview. Keagan Sandlin and Tandy Planichek both placed in the top 15.

Range science is another competition they competed in. The students identified plants, and plant anatomy. A general test on range knowledge such as soil, history, and pest management. The team was Dillion Ferster, Tristan Russell, Gunnar Smith, Brody Pelton, Cooper Hoines, Jacob Martin, Garrett Ferster, Colt Hoines, Rowdy Jensen, and Gage Martin.

Our students were also on a quiz bowl team. They competed in answering questions about agricultural related topics, such as, science, livestock, marketing, and more. One of the senior teams consisted of members Jacob Martin, Nila Dawson, Tandy Planicheck, and Keagan Sandlin. The Other senior team members were, Haylee Baver, Shalya Russell, Braelynn Williams, and Julianna Feddes.

Agribusiness Management is a competition where students complete a 100-question test over farm business paywork and concepts. The senior team consisted of Trevor Zumbrun, Bailey Kornick, Hattie Baver, Keagan Sandlin, and Tandy Planicheck.

Veterinary Science is a competition where competitors take a written test of knowledge, math, and an identification test consisting of different breeds of animals, parasites, and tools needed for this career. They are required to perform practicums such as, subcutaneous injections. This year's team, consisting of Haylee Baver, Hattie Baver, Saige Nye, Braelynn Williams, and Shayla Russell. They placed 12th out of 59 teams from across the state. Shayla placed 20th and Braelynn placed 40th out of competitors.

One contest that we do many times a year is livestock evaluation. Students work as a team to rank breeding and market animals. They give reasons on certain classes and explain why they would have placed them this way. The chapter has a senior and junior team. The senior team consists of Hattie Baver, Saige Nye, and Justin Heimer. The Junior team was Wyatt Kornick, Alli Noble, Amber Peterson, Logan Young, Brody Pelton, Gage Martin, and Tristan Russell.

Agronomy is an event where FFA members get the opportunity to learn and compete in the area of plants, grain quality, and different types of bugs, soils, and farming equipment. The team consisted of Juliana Feddes, Hattie Baver, Braelynn Williams, Saige Nye, and Shayla Russell. For a fairly inexperienced team, they placed very well, at twenty second place out of forty-four teams. Shayla placed 57th place out of 161 competitors.

Shayla Russell placed 1st in the Agriscience Fair, with her project, Deadly Disinfectants. In this project, she tested three different disinfectant's ability to prohibit bacterial growth. She would like to thank Ms. Frazer for making her do this project in eighth grade!

We had a junior and senior team in the mechanics competition. The kids making up the junior teams were; William Barnett, Garrett Ferster, Cooper Hoines, Wyatt Kornick, Gage Martin, Brody Pelton, Tristen Russel, Gunnar Smith, and Logan Young. They placed third place as a team. The senior team was; Dillon Ferster, Justin Heimer, Colt Hoines, Jacob Martin, and Trevor Zumbrun who placed 3rd individually.

The members also did workshops and tours. There was a keynote speaker and a dance to get all the members involved. Towards the end of November, we are working on fundraisers to raise money for our trips and contests. We are looking forward to December and more community events and contests to come.

### **Robotics & Career Day** *by Heidi Gunderson*

#### **High School Robotics Club**

Robotics club is in full swing!

Our first high school competition is February 5th. This will be a remote tournament. The state tournament is February 25th in Bozeman. Please wish us luck as we compete in these tournaments! Go Huskies!

#### **Career Day!**

We are working on changing things up this year for Absarokee Career Days. Instead of inviting professionals into our building, we are going out to see them at work! Tuesday, November 16, we took the juniors and seniors to Helena. We toured the Boeing factory and Helena College. Boeing has a wonderful program in partnership with Helena College. For needed majors, students at Helena College can earn a full-time job with Boeing. Students in this program work for Boeing Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Monday through Thursday they attend college at Helena College. They earn a good salary, full benefits, and have 100% tuition reimbursement. Once they graduate, they qualify for a higher position and salary at Boeing. We are so excited to introduce our students to this program! This will be the first of a few field trips for our students.

### **Counselor's Corner** *by Nicki Reissig*

We are full stride into this school year which means we have a ton of great things happening. So far, we have attended a College Fair in Billings and a CTE Fair in Red Lodge with the juniors and seniors. These have been educational and informative experiences. Each senior has met with me to do a post-secondary planning session. We have discussed college and career options and these kiddos are ready for big things after high school! We are shifting focus to working hard on scholarship applications and building strong resumes. Mrs. Gunderson and I are working on both a junior high career exploration day as well as one for the freshman and sophomore classes. Our elementary students are continuing to work on identifying feelings and using strategies when these feelings interfere with their day. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if you feel there is anything I can do to help your child. I wish you all an amazing holiday season!

### **Art** *by Matthew Mullen*

**High School Visual Arts-** Students have been busy exploring and creating artworks that highlight their personal interests and identity. Many students are improving their skills working with ceramic pottery and oil painting. They are discovering that art can be created through meticulous planning or through improvisation.

Progress is still being made on the Stillwater Market Mural. Mr. Mullen is currently coaching Junior High Girls Basketball and more of the mural will be completed after the season is finished.

**Elementary Art-** Students have recently worked with pottery and clay sculptures. Recent inspiration has come from artworks by artists such as Kandinsky and Georgia O'Keefe.

### **Husky Music Notes** *by Debbie Seibert*

**Congratulations!!** ...to the following music students who have been chosen by their peers to be leaders in Varsity Band and Choir!! **Caleb Zeigler, Band President; Shayla Russell, Band VP; Alli Noble, Band Sec./Treas.... Isaac Boyce, Choir President; Ammy Riddle, Choir VP and Ella Schlachter, Choir Sec./Treas.**

Music students have been working hard on an original song to honor our veterans this year. Sadly, our **Annual Veterans Day Concert had to be cancelled** due to illness. The piece, "HEROES AMONG US" will become a part of our spring music program instead!!

**Pep Band** will once again be rocking the gym and supporting our athletes beginning with our first HOME basketball game, Dec. 18!! Get ready to "stomp, stomp, clap" our way to victory!!

Spread the word... our 6-12 Grade Christmas Music Program will be fun, FUN, F-U-N!! **Dec. 20, 7 PM, at the AHS Gymnasium the entire community will join together for a "SING-A-LONG" CHRISTMAS.** There will be no food served this year, so admission for ALL is FREE!! See you there!!

### **FCCLA News** *by Carolyn Story*

After having scheduling issues, we will finally have our District 10 meeting on December 2nd in Columbus at the Evangelical Church. (note: our district includes Bridger, Columbus, Harlowton, Laurel, Red Lodge, and Reed Point.) There will be workshops featuring Taekwondo, an escape room, jitterbug dancing, and cookie decorating. There will be a keynote speaker and we will also hold elections for next year's district officers. We have a few events planned for the coming weeks and look forward to the district meeting.

 **Close Up** by *Johna Zumbrun*

The Close Up students are still selling the Little Blue Coupon Books for 20.00. You can stop by the high school office if you would like to purchase one. The Close Up students are having their annual Close Up Works Auction. It will be held on Saturday January 22, 2022 between the varsity girls and varsity boys' games.

 **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes 10/11/2021** by *Tanya Lester*

The Board of Trustees of School District 52 & 52C met at a regular meeting on Monday October 11, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the High School Library and on the Zoom platform with the following in attendance: Kayce Arthun, Mark Ferster, Ty Williams, Garth Pelton, Mike Pasecznyk, Superintendent Meredith Feddes, and Clerk Tanya Lester. Trustees Justine Dawson, Kathleen Howes, and Josh Royce joined the meeting by Zoom. Principle Cameron Barber also joined the meeting by Zoom. Trustee Shari DeSaveur was absent. Also present were Beth Pelton, Adree Langley, Kailey Campbell, Anna Donohoe, Chris Gunderson, Larry Barch, Kathy Barch, Mindy Young, Brian Young, Jimmie Lester, Rachel Barthelmess, Johna Zumbrun, Tucker Zumbrun, Catherine Frazer, Morgan Ator, Scott Barthelmess, Jordan Hickethier, and Richelle Kelly. Chairman Arthun called the meeting to order, and after the pledge she recognized the visitors.

There were no agenda changes. Per the consent agenda, **Ferster/Pelton moved to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021 regular board meeting, pay the elementary bills, pay the high school bills, and approve the activity account. Motion carried.**

Supt. Feddes updated the Board on fall enrollment numbers, activities that have been going on at the elementary school, and additional information on the upcoming active shooter drill. Principal Barber gave a report on activities that the student and teachers in the junior high and high school have been working on in the last month. Athletic Director Chris Gunderson reported on the wrapping up of fall sports season, plans for the District Volleyball Tourney that will be held in Absarokee, the Southern District AD meeting, football interviews with KULR8, and open gyms schedules. The Student Council reported on the success of Homecoming. They are also planning an upcoming Halloween Costume Contest. The Curriculum Committee met and discussed testing scores and how the staff will align the curriculum to the scores. The Facilities Committee met on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October and discussed a new rule about construction permits within the county and the facilities needs report. The Sandstone Building will need to be added back into the asbestos plan as long as it is still standing. There is a need for cold storage at the football field. Chairman Arthun is working on the rough draft of the upcoming board goals and went over what the goals were in the past. A report was given by Morgan Ator, who is the child and family therapist with the school's Literacy Grant.

The clerk asked the Board to consider voiding claim warrant #25156 from September 2020 for \$92.00 as it is more than a year old. **Pasecznyk/Williams moved to void warrant #25156 as requested. Motion carried.** It was also requested to add Mr. Barber as a signer on the Student Activity Checking Account. **Pasecznyk/Williams moved to add Mr. Barber as a signer on the Activity Checking Account. Motion carried.**

An Out of District Application was received on a student from the Fishtail District. Supt. Feddes recommended accepting the application. **Ferster/Williams moved to accept the Out of District Application from Fishtail as recommended. All elementary trustees voted in favor.**

Due to a shortage of substitutes, Supt. Feddes is asking to add Rachel Barthelmess to the substitute list. She is already a coach and has the necessary background check on file. **Pelton/Ferster move to add Rachel Barthelmess to the substitute list. Arthun, Dawson, Ferster, Williams, Pelton, Pasecznyk, and Howes. Royce abstained.**

There was discussion of athletic options that include: moving to 6-man football, creating a co-op with another school, and bringing 8<sup>th</sup> grade students up in volleyball and basketball. Supt. Feddes and Principal Barber presented surveys from students and coaches on each of the options. Coach Young addressed the Board on how he felt about the possible move to 6-man. Chris Gunderson has looked into the rules and spoke to MHSAs. He said the possibility is looking better for the school to move to 6-man. Larry Barch, the incoming boys' basketball coach, addressed the Board on how he felt about pulling up 8<sup>th</sup> graders to play on the high school team. **Ferster/Williams moved to ask MHSAs to allow 8<sup>th</sup> graders to play basketball at the varsity level per coaches' discretion with 15 as the cutoff. Motion carried. Royce/Pelton moved to send a letter to MHSAs requesting consideration to move to 6-man football for the 2022-23 school year. Motion carried.**

Mrs. Zumbrun is planning a trip to Washington DC with Close-Up. She would like to request that the date be open to take student out of state due to students having conflicts with the first proposed dates. She has nine students interested in traveling. **Ferster/Pasecznyk moved to approve the Close Up trip traveling to Washington DC as presented by Mrs. Zumbrun. All trustees voted in favor.**

Chairman Arthun presented the new MTSBA Model Policies. **Ferster/Williams moved to remove Policies 2312P and 4330F1 as recommended by MTSBA. Motion carried.** During the discussion on Policy 3235 regarding security cameras, Chairman Arthun read a statement from Mr. Lester about exactly which cameras have audio capabilities. There are four including: the doorbell camera at the high school, the two Pixelot cameras at the gym and football field, and the old security camera above the current Pixelot camera in the gym. **Williams/Pelton moved to approve the updates to 1420, 2140, 2168, 2221P, 2240, 3121, 3222, 3231, 3235 as discussed. Motion carried.** Chairman Arthun recommended that the rest of the policies have at least one more reading.

In public comment, Kathy Barch spoke about the downturn in enrollment. She has heard that there was a large exodus of students from Absarokee Schools. Adree Langley and Kailey Campbell spoke to the Board about a proposed class trip. They would like to have a Friday-Monday weekend trip, which would be an extra day from a Senior Skip Day.

Upcoming meeting dates were decided and the October and November calendars were presented. With no further business, **Pelton/Pasecznyk moved to adjourn at 9:53 PM. Motion carried.**

Absarokee Schools  
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## **BOXHOLDER**

*The community is invited to a*

# **SING-A-LONG**



# **CHRISTMAS**

*Monday, December 20th  
AHS Gymnasium, 7 pm*

*Hosted by Absarokee Schools' Band & Choir*



*Free fun for everyone!*

