



Absarokee Public Schools

327 South Woodard Avenue – Absarokee, Montana 59001

www.absarokee.k12.mt.us

Home of the Huskies

Issue # 8

April 2022



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

Spring has sprung. Students are working hard to complete the end of year assessments, while staff are trying to keep them in check. SMARTER Balanced assessments will be April 4-8 and makeups will be the following week. Our end of year MAP and DIBELS testing will be May 2-13.

It seems that there are some areas that as a staff we would like to remind our school community of. While we continue to try to teach the children of the community, we are reminded we have gone through two years of emotional rollercoaster and trauma. There are times when our staff have chosen to give grace to students when there is something troubling the students and for that we are fortunate. Absarokee Schools have a resilient, caring and understanding staff. This pandemic has had its toll on our staff through the many changes and as a board and administration we are attempting to give the same grace our staff have. Asking staff to take on every extra duty, while teaching, reteaching, changing plans and new programs and policies has impacted the energy level of our staff as well. If a staff member doesn't seem as they were before please consider giving grace yourself when having conversations with them. Continuing to have conversations is, however, more important than ever. Our students need parents and staff discussing their individual needs and the collective needs of all our students and staff. One item that does not make this better is to have the behind closed-door meetings with a small group or individuals and vent or complain about a topic. Open, honest conversations even when they are hard help solve the problems and needs of our students, staff and district. Through the strategic planning there have been some important topics brought to the school from the community. As we see across the state and nation, educators are leaving the profession in large numbers. To prevent the same thing from happening in our district please remember to give grace, consider having conversations when there is a problem and discuss with the individuals involved not others in the school or community to build trust. Absarokee Schools has a loyal faculty, working on district goals, and building a positive school climate. One Town, One School, One Family.

Our school election will take place on Tuesday, May 3. The election will take place at the polls; however, mail ballots will be sent to those on the list. We are asking the public to continue funding at the current rate through a levy request. This will mean with a passage of the levy we will have a budget of \$1,293,524.21 in the elementary and \$1,098,816.19 in the high school. Should the levy not pass the budget for the elementary would be \$1,259,486.02 and the high school \$1,049,205.02. The levels of funding we were at during the 2021-22 school year were \$1,291,612.70 in the elementary and \$1,091,599.40. As the numbers indicate in order to not cut programs or staff we would need to have the additional funds to maintain our current level. There will also be voting on a 1-year board position and a 3-year board position.

We will work on a final Strategic Planning meeting for the year on April 19th in the Elementary Gym. A proposed Strategic Plan will be presented at this meeting and we will take final comments on changes for the plan. This is a 5-year plan that has long range goals for 10-20 years out. If you are unable to attend yet would like to give feedback please email those to feddesm@absaroke.k12.mt.us or call and share at 328-4581. The final plan will be published in the first newsletter of the 2022-23 school year and on the school website.

Our elementary students will have a Farm Fair held April 21. This will include education on agricultural topics as well as visits from some animals. If you would like to assist please contact Mrs. Donohoe at the school. We encourage parents, grandparents and other family to join us for the afternoon if you are interested in our event.

Kindergarten Roundup will be held on April 29th. If you have a student of kindergarten age we are asking for you to call the school, 328-4581, and schedule a time to register them and have your child participate in some assessments.

The school board discussed the need for additional help in areas around the school and are putting together a list of those willing to help with reading, math, other academic areas, helping with classes or activities (FFA, sports activity workers, Earth Day), or other areas you have an expertise. If you would contact a board member or call the school with your expertise the board will keep a list. Thanks in advance for your help.



JH/HS Principal *by Cameron Barber*

We are officially three-quarters of the way done with the school year, as the 3rd quarter came to an end on March 18th. Just like every quarter our students have been working hard and have been very busy with activities and sports.

The basketball season came to an end for both teams at districts. Both teams played very well but fell short of making it to the divisional round. Although they did not advance, both teams had a very successful season and worked hard all season.

Absarokee Jr. High students completed their science fair projects. Everyone one of them did a terrific job. After all the judging was done the final results were: 6th grade- 1st- Mallary P 2nd- Hayden G 3rd- Sawyer C 7th grade- 1st- Tristan R 2nd- Brody P and Garrett F 3rd- Riley A 8th- 1st- Tie Mary A, Cooper H, and Rowdy J. 2nd- Will B 3rd- Mackenzie W Congratulations to the winners and all the junior high students that competed.

Our seniors have had the opportunity to participate in job shadowing. They went to different businesses to see what their job was like firsthand. Each student that participated tried to go to a business or job that was something that they were looking into going into after high school. Some of the businesses that they were able to attend were: Yellowstone Art Museum, Western Ranch Supply, Lithia Dodge, Billings Tech Guys, KULR 8 News, Physical Therapy in Motion, Tippet Rise, Bill Pelton Livestock, Stephens Machine, Billings Dermatology, and Microsoft (online). They all had a lot of fun and it was a great experience for them all. We would like to thank all of the businesses that opened up their doors for our students.

Both the junior high and high school students competed in the Science Bowl this year. Both of the competitions were over Zoom this year. The junior high had two teams and the high school had one team. For the junior high Will B, Cooper H, Tristan R, and August B got 3rd overall and will receive a trophy! Mackenzie W, Josie T, and Hayden G got 5th. For the high school. For the high school Adree G, Nila D, Avery G, Dillon F, and Allison H did very well in the preliminary rounds but did not make it to the final round of the top 4. Congratulations to all the students that participated.

The Absarokee Robotics Team also got to compete in Belgrade. They participated with 20 teams from all over the state. Monique M, Allison H, and Callen G were the three that represented Absarokee. They had a very good day and came in 8th place. They worked very hard all year practicing after school, and it paid off for them. Job well done.

Spring sports are on the go now with golf, track, and softball co-op. The students started to practice on March 14th, and competitions will begin very shortly. We can only hope that the Montana spring weather will hold up for them to get ready for the season.

The year is flying by and before we know it summer will have arrived. Go Huskies!



Board of Trustees News by Kayce Arthun, Board Chairperson

Greetings from your Absarokee Board of Trustees!

Spring is in the air and new life abounds everywhere you look. Spring is a busy time at the school as spring testing and the 4th quarter are in full swing, extra-curricular competitions are taking place and the final push of the school year is here. **With all that is going on, please continue to follow our school website at <https://hgunderson6wixsite.com/absarokee-schools> and the Absarokee Huskies Facebook page for the latest changes and happenings!**

With a nationwide shortage of educators, it has become increasingly challenging to find teachers to fill open positions. Ideally, schools would love to hire veteran, certified teachers for every position that becomes available; however, as I write this (03/17/22) the Montana Office of Public Instruction currently has over 600 educator roles open for hire in the state of Montana. Hiring educators has become a daunting task. With those odds, school districts are having to think outside the box to fill positions. We must at times look to professionally develop our own or hire within the other parameters that the state has given us in regards to certification. In the state of Montana, you may teach with the following certifications:

1. Have a bachelor's degree with an endorsement in early childhood education, elementary education, middle school education, secondary education, K-12 education, P-12 education or special education. This will give you a **Class 2 Standard Certificate which is primarily used for beginning teachers with a bachelor's degree who have completed an accredited teacher preparation program.**
2. There is also a **Class 1 Professional Certificate, which requires three years of successful K-12 teaching experience and a master's degree.**
3. Montana also has an alternative certification, which is a **Class 5 alternative license which lasts for three years while a candidate completes a valid teacher preparation program and/or requisite coursework.** Those with a Class 5 License sign a Plan of Professional Intent agreeing to complete their deficient requirements within 3 years.

With each position that becomes available, we are working diligently as a district to recruit and retain qualified individuals. However; at times both in the present and the past we have been unable to fill the position with a Class 1 or Class 2 certification so we are having to rely on the Class 5 Alternative certification. We do not do this lightly. When we hire under the Class 5, we are making certain that the Plan of Professional Intent is clearly defined and followed. We are supporting these individuals with mentors from both in and out of the district, professional development and any other tool we can to support them to be successful educators as they work towards their certification. We understand the concerns that may come from this practice and that it can be confusing, so please reach out to the administration or myself if you have questions.

On May 3, we will be coming to you as a district asking you to continue funding at the current level through a levy request. So, what does that mean exactly? Please see the chart below:

	FY2022 Budget	FY2023 Budget	FY2023 Budget	Difference
		With Levy	Without Levy	Without Levy
Elementary (k-8):	\$1,291,612.70	\$1,293,524.21	\$1,259,486.02	\$34,038.20
High School (9-12):	\$1,091,599.50	\$1,098,816.19	\$1,049,205.02	\$49,611.17

As you can see, with passage of the levy our budgets will only slightly increase from FY2022 to FY2023; however, without passage we will lose approximately \$83,649.36 from our current funding levels. That type of deficit makes it challenging to maintain our staff and programs at the current level. We understand and appreciate the fact that passing the levy will increase your taxes. The elementary levy will increase the taxes on a home with a market value of \$100,000 by approximately \$3.57 and on a home with a market value of \$200,000 by approximately \$7.13. The high school levy will increase the taxes on a home with a market value of \$100,000 by approximately \$3.20 and on a home with a market value of \$200,000 by approximately \$6.40. With today's current climate we know asking you to pay more taxes is a burden; however, we ask that you consider doing so to allow us to continue to maintain our current programs and staff. Thank you for your consideration and please contact me if you have questions at 328-7880 or kayce.arthun@absarokee.k12.mt.us.

As the days grow longer and with plenty of spring school activities, we hope you will come join us to cheer on the Huskies in whatever forum they may be performing in! Thank you again to each of you as you continue to support the Absarokee School District "One Town, One School, One Family". Happy Spring!

Elementary School Farm Fair *by Anna Donohoe*

Join us for our second annual FARM FAIR on April 21st from 12:00-2:00. It's all about BEEF!!!

- Stick horse rodeo, - Visits from a vet, - Noxious weeds activity and special animal visits

Stillwater Valley FFA *by Bailey Kornick, Reporter*

The Stillwater Valley celebrated FFA week. It was a fun week for the members and the high school. The dates were 22nd through the 25th of February. We had dress-up days such as; dress like a farmer, animal and hunting day, and hat day. The chapter also went up to Park City to meet with the National FFA Western Region Vice President, Josiah Cruikshank. Before we headed to Park City, we served a pancake breakfast to the teachers and staff of the Elementary and High Schools.

March 5th, the Senior Mechanics team went up to Conrad for an overnight trip and mechanics contest. The team placed 5th and consisted of; Trevor Zumbrun, Colt Hoines, Logan Young, Dillon Ferster, Jakson Heimer, and Jacob Martin. Trevor placed 2nd overall individually. The Vet Science team went to Sheridan, Wyoming with Mrs. Hamel. The team consists of Shayla Russell, Keagan Sandlin, Hattie Bayer, and Saige Nye and the team placed 17th overall.

Now for upcoming events. The chapter is hosting the fourth and final round of districts on the 17th of March, this contest will be Livestock Evaluation, Vet Science, and Farm Business Management. We would like to thank all the community members that are helping out with this contest and the Young family for the use of the Anipro Event Center.

On March 21st and 22nd, the chapter will be heading to Miles City for CDE Days. Then the following week we head to the Montana State FFA Convention which is March 30th through April 2nd. After the convention, the chapter will start to focus more on the upcoming banquet and greenhouse plant sales. The end of the Year Banquet is going to be held on May 4th starting at 6 pm. The theme this year is vintage FFA. The plant sales are planned to start on May 12th weather permitting.

Art *by Matthew Mullen*

High School Visual Arts - Introductory art students have created a variety of artworks in different media ranging from pottery, oil painting, and pencil. Advanced students have finished portrait paintings and drawings with their choice of acrylic, oil, or watercolor. Students have discovered and faced the challenges of proportion, placement, and value while working on capturing the likeness of an individual person.

Junior High Art- Students have completed several acrylic paintings. They have learned about intuitive abstract painting and methods and processes.

Elementary Art- Elementary students have been working on art materials such as acrylics, chalk pastel, and colored markers. Inspiration has come from studying historical artists such as Monet, Basquiat, and Hans Hofmann.

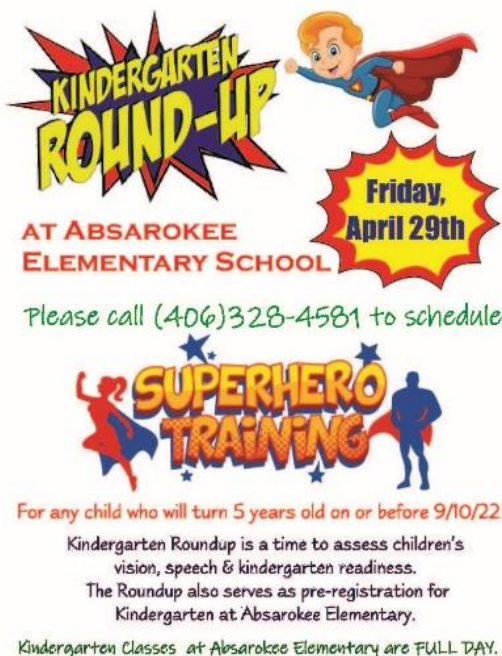
Say "Yes" to the Prom Dress *by Heidi Gunderson*

Our Say "Yes" to the Prom Dress event was held March 13 and it was a great success! We can't wait to do it next year! We would like to thank Touch of Country Catering for their generous donation of refreshments. The cookies were delicious and made the day that much sweeter! We would also like to thank our MANY volunteers for helping to sort dresses and helping the girls find their perfect dress. We would also like to thank Jennifer Mullen, Casey Campbell, and Mary Sharp for bringing your business to the event. We are so lucky to have such amazing talent in our community! Last but not least, we would like to send a HUGE thank you to everyone who donated a dress. This event would not have happened without your donations and the girls will treasure the memories they make with your beautiful donations.

Robotics *by Heidi Gunderson*

Our high school robotics program earned 8th place at state robotics this year! The team was our smallest team ever with Monique Mondragon, Allison Howes, and Callen Gunderson as returning members. We placed 8th out of 20 teams, which is our highest ranking in our team history! We made many connections with other teams at state and the girls are already planning for next year. Go huskies!

Kindergarten Round Up *by Raina Shupe*



We're "Roundin Up" Kindergartners for Absarokee Elementary School next fall!

Absarokee Elementary School has set the annual Kindergarten Roundup date for **Friday, April 29th** in the **Absarokee Elementary School building**. Testing takes approximately 1 hour and **appointments are necessary** in order for your child to participate. Please call the elementary school at 328-4581 to register your child.

To enroll in kindergarten, children must be 5 years old on or before September 10, 2022. Absarokee Elementary School offers full day Kindergarten only. Parents need to bring a photocopy of the child's **birth certificate and immunization** records to the Roundup.

The purpose of the Kindergarten Roundup is to assess children's readiness for kindergarten and screen their hearing, vision, and speech. Additionally, it serves as pre-registration for our school so that staff will be better prepared for school in the fall.

We look forward to seeing you and your children at this year's Kindergarten Roundup!



Absarokee Teams Excel at Science Bowl *by Catherine Frazer*

The Big Sky Regional Science Bowl competitions were held on March 10 and March 11. This is a face paced quiz bowl competition with questions from math, physics, chemistry, biology, energy, and earth and space science. This year's competition was held virtually over Zoom, which makes it different and difficult, but the Absarokee teams did great.

In the middle school competition there were 12 teams, including 2 from Absarokee. Both teams survived the preliminary rounds and made it to the elimination round of the top 8. Team 2 (Josie Thomsen, Mackenzie Wood, and Hayden Gunderson) ended up in a tie

for 5th place overall. Team 1 (Will Barnett, Tristan Russell, Cooper Hoines, and August Baker) made it to the round of 4, and finished 3rd overall. They will receive a trophy and medals soon. They were the only Class C school in the final 4, competing against Belgrade, North Middle School (Great Falls) and Saint Francis (Billings).

In the high school competition one team from Absarokee competed in a field of 6 much larger schools. The AHS team was Adree Langley, Nila Dawson, Avery Gates, Allison Howes and Dillon Ferster. Tom Murphy helped out as an alternate. The AHS team did very well in the preliminary rounds, but was eliminated in the first knockout round when the questions were especially difficult.

These teams were coached by Chris Gunderson and Catherine Frazer and had been practicing during lunch for the past two months.

This year's Science Bowls were bittersweet for Ms. Frazer who will be retiring this year. She has coached the middle school teams for 17 years, and the high school teams for 22 years.



Job Shadowing *by Heidi Gunderson*

Heidi Gunderson and Nicki Reissig started a job shadowing program this year for our junior and senior students. This program allows the students to select at least two careers they would like to follow (or shadow) for one day. The students select their career interests. Mrs. Gunderson and Mrs. Reissig locate employers for them to shadow for one day. So far, nearly all of the seniors have completed at least one job shadow. Some of our job shadowing experiences include:

- Computer Science at the Yellowstone Art Museum
- Journalism at KULR 8 News
- Computer Science/Technology at Billings Tech Guys
- Agriculture Sales at Western Ranch Supply
- Sales at Lithia Dodge in Billings
- Physical Therapy at Physical Therapy in Motion
- Physician's Assistant at Billings Dermatology
- Welding at Stephen's Machine
- Ranch Hand at Tippet Rise
- Computer Programming at Microsoft
- Ranching/Livestock at Pelton Livestock

We would like to thank these businesses for volunteering their time and working with our students. Our goal is to prepare students for the jobs they want. They are having a great time and learning so much about their future careers!

Absarokee Science Fair Results *by Catherine Frazer*

The 24th annual Absarokee Science Fair was held on Wednesday, February 23. All of the students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade participated. A total of 54 students presented a total of 45 projects. The students who won blue ribbons will go on to participate in the Billings Science Expo on March 18.

6th grade winners

- 1st place - Mallary Pelton - "Heart on fire"
- 2nd place - Hayden Gunderson - "Pop goes the geyser!"
- 3rd place - Sawyer Carpenter - "Best berry keeping containers"

Other blue-ribbon winners were Tucker Zumbrun, August Baker, Mylie Campbell, Dusty Williams, Chael Roberts, Rebecca Kelly, Chassity Heskett and Astrid Routen.

7th grade winners

- 1st place - Tristan Russell - "Mousetrap car lever arms"
- 2nd place - Brody Pelton & Garrett Ferster - "A new type of engine"
- 3rd place - Riley Adams - "Which brand of paper towel holds the most weight?"

The other blue-ribbon winner was Greta Smith.

8th grade winners

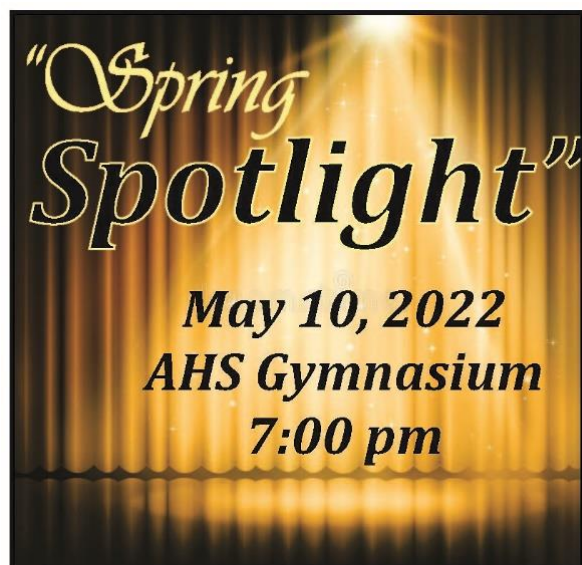
- 1st place - Mary Arthun - "Give me the speed I need!"
- 1st place - Cooper Hoines & Rowdy Jensen - "What material burns fastest and hottest?"
- 2nd place - William Barnett - "Hang on!"
- 3rd place - Mackenzie Wood - "Muffin fluffin"

Other blue-ribbon winners were Gracie Best, Adisyn Kennedy, Josie Thomsen, Summer Heimer, and Emma Kennedy. The **overall winners** of the entire fair was a tie between **Mary Arthun and Cooper Hoines & Rowdy Jensen**.

Thank you to all of the judges: Donna von Nieda, Kurt von Nieda, Christopher Pasecznyk, Roberta Parrott, Gwen Aubrey, Kayce Arthun, Mark Ferster, Justine Dawson, Sarah Barlau-Russell, Chris Gunderson, Adree Langley, Kailey Campbell, Nila Dawson and Trevor Zumbrun.

Billings Job Fair *by Heidi Gunderson*

Mrs. Reissig and Mrs. Gunderson took all of the juniors and seniors to the Billings Job Fair in March. The job fair has over 500 employers represented across Montana with a wide variety of employment opportunities. There are also apprenticeship opportunities for those not interested in career or technical education. This allows students to view opportunities they were not familiar with and allows them to see multiple businesses in one location. It was a fun afternoon and the students learned so much about opportunities in our area!



**Featuring: Absarokee Bands
Choirs, Solos & Ensembles**

Admission is free!!!



Husky Music Notes *by Debbie Seibert*



It was "MARCH MADNESS" in the Music Department, for sure, this past month!! Both Jr. High and H.S. Band members attended the **TRI-COUNTY HONOR BAND "BAND DAY"** April 16 in Huntley Project. Judges had grrrrreat things to say about our students' performances!!

Both Absarokee H.S. Band AND Absarokee H.S. Choir then participated in **MHS District #9 MUSIC FESTIVAL** on March 29 in Billings. Results were not back in time to make this month's newsletter but we will be congratulating these groups in May's "HUSKY NOTES" for certain!!

On Monday, April 4, our Husky Musicians will send a **record number** of solos/ensembles to Billings for District #9 "SOLO/ENSEMBLE" FESTIVAL"... those receiving the highest scores will move on to State competition. WISH THEM LUCK!!

Do not forget to mark **Tuesday, MAY 10**, down on your calendars!! The 6-12 Grade Music Classes' Annual "**SPRING SPOTLIGHT**" will take place at 7:00 PM in the AHS Gym. What a wonderful way to wrap up the year!! ...and, as always, admission is FREE!!

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Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Non-voted Levies

As an essential part of its budgeting process, the Absarokee Elementary School District is authorized by law to impose levies to support its budget. The Board of Trustees estimates the following increase/decrease in revenues and mills for the funds noted below for the next school fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, using certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year as provided to the district:

	Estimated Change in Revenues	Estimated Change in Mills	Estimated Impact Home of \$100,000	Estimated Impact Home of \$200,000
Transportation	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bus Depreciation	\$10,000	0.78	\$1.06	\$2.11
Tuition	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Adult Education	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Flexibility	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Building Reserve	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$10,000	0.78	\$1.06	\$2.11

***Impacts above are estimated and based on current certified taxable valuations from the current school year.

Be it resolved this 14th day of March, 2022 that the above resolution was presented at a regular school board meeting and adopted by the Board of Trustee of the Absarokee Elementary School District.

Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Non-voted Levies

As an essential part of its budgeting process, the Absarokee High School District is authorized by law to impose levies to support its budget. The Board of Trustees estimates the following increase/decrease in revenues and mills for the funds noted below for the next school fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, using certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year as provided to the district:

	Estimated Change in Revenues	Estimated Change in Mills	Estimated Impact Home of \$100,000	Estimated Impact Home of \$200,000
Transportation	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bus Depreciation	\$10,000	0.48	\$0.65	\$1.30
Tuition	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Adult Education	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Flexibility	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Building Reserve	\$0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$10,000	0.48	\$0.65	\$1.30

***Impacts above are estimated and based on current certified taxable valuations from the current school year.

Be it resolved this 14th day of March, 2022 that the above resolution was presented at a regular school board meeting and adopted by the Board of Trustee of the Absarokee High School District.

This document must also document the District's expected use of its Building Reserve/State Major Maintenance levies and associated funding. The District expects to use those proceeds to partially fund improvements listed in the annual Facilities Condition Report that the District maintains in the High School Office as well as operational costs of school safety. The District estimates that funding structure will generate approximately \$53,760 during the 2022-23 school year, with a net cost of 45,559 or 2.78 mills.