



Absarokee Public Schools

327 South Woodard Avenue – Absarokee, Montana 59001

www.absarokee.k12.mt.us

Home of the Huskies

Issue # 3

November 2020



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

The weather has finally turned to fall instead of just hot and dry. This means we will soon be into November and snowfall. A reminder that our students will be going outside to get fresh air and avoid the masks until the temperature falls below 0. When the wind is blowing we will use our judgement on if we want students out even above the 0 degree mark. Please remember to send hats, gloves, snow boots, snow pants and all other warm gear with your children. We attempt to keep it dry or get it where it can dry out during the day if it does get wet. We will not be able to share these items this year, so if you would like to leave an extra in your child's locker of any item feel free to.

Chromebooks are in the hands of each and every student. In order to keep your child's Chromebook in working order it is important to keep the device at a temperature near 60 degrees. This means leaving it in a cold vehicle overnight will shorten the life of the battery. Elementary students should bring their backpacks in the moment they arrive at school and put their backpacks in the warmth of the school. This will keep the device warm and prevent damage from others rushing to get in from the cold.

I would like to thank Alison Shieldt at the Commons for providing Italian cream sodas to the AES students that pass their math fact fluency Rockets. We appreciate your generosity!

We have two consultants visiting our district this year. Craig Buscher is our consultant with the Comprehensive Schools Grant. He is working on assisting our interventionists in making the necessary changes to curriculum, interventions, progress monitoring, data collection and accommodations/modifications. We will be monitoring our progress and hopefully our SMARTER Balanced and ACT scores demonstrate our growth to finish this program. Wayne Callender is our second consultant and he is part of the Montana Literacy Grant. This is the grant written by Mrs. Gunderson to assist in our Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral Implementation and literacy growth. Mr. Callender is working on the components of effective instruction with our staff. We are currently working with Gradual Release, which is another way of saying every student succeeds. Staff are working on making sure that each concept they teach is learned or it is revisited with those not understanding and additional practice is provided. Those who understand are then given enrichment activities and allowed to work independently.

MHSA has postponed our season start for winter sports. We will be beginning practices for basketball and wrestling on December 7th and new schedules will be put out when they become available. The rules for spectators will be released as we get closer to the start times. Junior High Girls Basketball has, however, started and we are hopeful that it may run the course of the entire season.

By the time this arrives at your mailbox we will have completed a quarter of our school year.

We are extremely thankful for the staff, students and community who have worked so hard to keep the doors open and activities going. While this year has been quite different than any we have had before there are still learning opportunities our staff continue to provide with safety measures in place. Please call and make an appointment if there is anything you would like to discuss about the programs that are happening.

Please be reminded that we have an early release on November 11 at 2:30 and there will be a three-day vacation at Thanksgiving.

I would like to thank our entire staff for the efforts they have put in to this point in the year. Our maintenance and custodial staff have worked especially hard to keep things clean and have even offered to cover extra hours to assist in this process, our secretarial staff have had to make major shifts in order to keep attendance records and schedule changes for those calling in, our teaching staff have gone the extra mile to teach in person, get assignments out when a student is ill and internet is not available, while also teaching virtually to those who are out and have service, our paraprofessionals have stepped up to take on interventions, cleaning, and additional duties, our bus drivers for their shifting schedules and taking on extra cleaning, and finally Mr. Zumbrun who has taken on extra bus driving responsibilities, shifting schedules and assisting when something pops up. The season of Thanksgiving is upon us and the gratitude we show can go a long way in the current situation.

Grace: courteous goodwill. This is a term that we need to utilize going forward for the year. There may be items that get shifted and your student doesn't get to participate, rules may change, and in general things aren't the same, but if we show grace to others we can make progress without the frustration and resentment. Whenever there is a situation that arises for your child please contact the person involved and use grace to handle the situation.

 **JH/HS Principal** by Mr. Zumbro

As I prepared this newsletter, I couldn't help but think of a trip I took a week ago. As part of my military responsibilities, I was invited to travel to Fort Hood, Texas and welcome home soldiers of the Montana Army National Guard. They were returning from a year-long deployment, but will be remaining in Texas for a few more weeks for redeployment activities. Although they were certainly happy to be back on US soil, I'm sure they and their families are even more anxious to have them home. I'm thankful for their safe return and wish them well as they reintegrate into their respective communities across Montana and neighboring states. Several of the soldiers have babies at home whom they've not yet been able to hold. When they departed their families a year ago, very few people even knew what COVID is and they've returned to a much different situation than the one they left. I am reminded of how quickly things change. I recall my own military deployments, the time being gone and all the things I missed with my boys as they grew up. Time flies! We tend to take a lot for granted, until it is gone! With that being said, Thanksgiving break is scheduled for November 25-27th, and I think this would be a great time to really reflect on all the things for which we are thankful. I know that I am thankful for the fact that our school is open and our sports teams are currently allowed to play. I remain hopeful we will continue to be able to provide in-person instruction to our students and have fans in the stands to cheer on our athletes through the rest of the school year. Our kids, our parents, our staff, & our entire community needs this. When you have the opportunity to come watch them play, I hope you take full advantage.

The HOPE, RESPECT, DREAM & CHANGE Region 7 (HRDC7) strategic planner reached out and asked that we let people know about them. They are reaching out to individuals and families of Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone Counties that need assistance with energy bills, housing emergencies, homelessness, and other vital needs. The agency has 24 core programs to assist low income people that need help. HRDC7 will soon be receiving COVID relief funds to assist additional families that have been affected by COVID and are experiencing loss of jobs and income. Those seeking assistance can call their office at: 800-433-1411, email them at info@hrdc7, or access their website at www.hrdc7.org

Winter Sports Season Changes:

The Montana High School Association Executive Board met on Tuesday, October 13th and determined they would be postponing the start of the winter sports seasons. This action will affect basketball and wrestling at Absarokee. The below statement came from MHSA's memo of Executive Board action:

"The Board approved delaying the start of winter sports (basketball, wrestling and swimming) practices until December 7th. The original practice start date was November 19th. The first contests can be held on January 4th. The delay will allow time for schools and communities to assist in flattening the curve and to get through two holiday seasons within their own teams and within their own communities before contests begin."

Lastly, I'd like to thank our students and staff for their hard work and dedication these past few months. It's unfortunate that we are in this COVID environment, but they are all doing the best they can to "normalize" things as much as possible. While wearing a mask all day is not my vision of "ideal" working or learning conditions, it's what we must do at the moment and hopefully it will help us get through this pandemic while preserving the health and well-being of our family, friends and neighbors. Stay positive and stay healthy!

 **BPA** by Chad Baver

BPA had 8 students attend the virtual Fall Leadership Conference on October 5th. Our students were involved in workshops and activities pertaining to leadership, recruitment and community service. They were also able to compete in the Biz Bowl competition which tested their knowledge on business, finance and information technology subject matter. Next, students will be gearing up for the virtual Regional Conference, which is tentatively set for December 11th. This will include our members competing in various business-related competitions on their way to the State Conference.

 **Stillwater Valley FFA** by Mr. Yates

The chapter competed in their first virtual competition on October 7. Logan Young, Wyatt Kornick, Amber Peterson, Alli Nobel, Alexia Feddes, Kaitlyn Lohof, Shayla Russell and Keagan Sandlin participated in the NILE Livestock Evaluation. There were seven different classes that they judged. There were some technical difficulties with the internet and with ZOOM on giving reasons. We used this contest as a learning experience for us.

The chapter officers met a few weeks ago and decided on a fun day for the FFA Chapter. They decided to go to the corn maze in Billings. On October 16, a total of 24 FFA/FCCLA chapter members spent an evening at the corn maze, playing carnival games and going through the petting zoo. Mrs. Story met us there with Pizza from Dominos. The chapters want to thank Brian Young for taking us down. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

John Deere Ag days is still in the planning stages. Most of the competitions will be virtual. Mechanics, Ag Sales, Agronomy and Vet Science will be meeting in various locations throughout the state to keep the numbers down.

The chapter will be selling Martinson Chocolates again for a fundraiser. They will start selling around November 6th and will continue through Thanksgiving weekend.

Counselor's Corner *by Jodi Heard*

Junior Guidance Appointments

All juniors will need to schedule a guidance appointment with Ms. Heard, in the month of November. During this time, each student's transcript will be evaluated for requirements met, number of credits needed, testing preparation and future plans will be discussed. Please be sure you visit with your student about which senior classes they will be taking and their post-secondary plans, prior to their appointment.

HOBY

HOBY offers sophomores throughout the United States an opportunity to participate in youth leadership activities that they can use to give back to their schools and communities. Students will spend three or four exciting days exploring leadership, while collaborating with students from throughout Montana. Students return from HOBY with a new sense of self-awareness and an elevated confidence in their individual potential. Registration is now open. Any sophomore interested in participating please sign up with Ms. Heard by November 16th.

Selective Service Registration

Under federal law, virtually all men must register with Selective Service System within 30 days of their 18th birthday. However, early submission of registration information by 17-year-old men is now accepted. Registering with Selective Service qualifies students for student loans and grants, job training, and Federal employment.

Free ACT

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has exciting news. On Tuesday, March 23, 2021, all Montana juniors will have the opportunity to take the ACT Plus Writing in their high schools. All colleges and universities in the United States as well as the NCAA accept ACT scores as part of the admission process.

Usually students have to travel to a testing site for a Saturday administration and pay for the assessment. Because of funding through a federal grant, every junior will have the opportunity to take the ACT Plus Writing on a school day, in their high school, and at no cost to the student or the student's family. Students will be given the opportunity to select up to four colleges or scholarship agencies to receive their scores following testing.

Free ACT test preparation resources are online at the following site:

<http://actonlineprep.act.org/ePrep/browserInfo.do>. Any student 9-12 is able to access this preparation program to practice ACT test questions, practice essays for the ACT writing test and view a comprehensive content review for each of the ACT's four required tests.

They will also be able to take a test that will diagnose their skill levels and develop a personalized study plan to help them attain the scores they want. AOP can be used anytime and anywhere there is access to the internet.

Academy Application Process

Junior year is when the Academy application process truly begins. Students will start by filling out the pre-candidate questionnaire which becomes available March 1 of each year. Students must submit their questionnaire online between March 10 of their junior year and December 31 of their senior year.

If a student is interested in seeing what life at the Academy is really like, they should consider applying for the Summer Seminar Program. See Ms. Heard for more information.

Montana Career Information System

MCIS is a tool available for teens and families to link skills and talents to occupations. This is a service provided through the Montana Department of Labor and Industry to help students create a customized, personal learning plan. All high school students, in Mr. Bayer's classes, were trained to use MCIS by a Reach Higher Montana representative. Each student is encouraged to create a profile and start finding career information that fits their interests.

FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid

FAFSA is the first step in the process of finding loans, grants, and scholarships that will help a student pay for their higher education. October 1, 2020 FAFSA opened for all seniors to apply for next year's post-secondary aid. For more information and resources to help complete the FAFSA visit Reach Higher Montana.

Montana Youth Apprenticeship Partnership

MYAP is a working of employers, government agencies, and community partners working to increase opportunities for Montanan's youth to prepare for in-demand careers through youth apprenticeship programs. MYAP is developing and piloting youth apprenticeship programs in Helena and Billings, targeting health care and information technology as primary industry sectors. Plans include the expansion of youth apprenticeship programs in more industries and more communities.

 **Visual Arts** by *Matthew Mullen*

High School Beginning:

Students are improving their design process skills and making quality artworks. They have researched a number of historical and contemporary artists. Students are also learning that experimentation of media is an important part of the process.

Advanced Art Studio:

Students successfully created an Assemblage artwork that represents some aspect of the student's personal history. Now they are developing ideas for Project #2. In addition to the project work, students have been developing their observational drawing skills using weekly still life drawing practice.

Elementary Art:

Students are making nature and seasonal themed artworks. Artworks created by artists like Claude Monet and Tom Thomson have been used as inspiration points for student art making.

 **Adult Education** by *Donna Malson*

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Donna Mattson at 328-4342

 **Board of Trustees Meeting** by *Tanya Lester*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING – September 14, 2020

The Board of Trustees of School District 52 & 52C met at a regular meeting on Monday, September 14, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. in the Elementary Gym with the following in attendance: Diana Scollard, Donna von Nieda, Kayce Arthun, Clayton Young, Eric Esp, Mike Pasecznyk, Joshua Royce, Superintendent Feddes, Principal Zumbrun, and Clerk Tanya Lester. Trustee Justine Dawson joined the meeting by phone. Also present were Brande Young, Keara Young, Jordan Hicketier, Andy Simpson, Jackie Walker, Janel Brunckhorst, Tori Lewis, Merrill Ostrum, MeKayla Walton, MaKenzie Walton, Tonya Steffenson, Johna Zumbrun, Brian Young, Colton Young, Jessica Griffin, Chere Jiusto, and Afton Lamoreaux. After standing for the pledge, Chairman Scollard recognized all visitors.

There were no agenda changes. **Esp/Young moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2020 Board Meeting, pay elementary bills, pay high school bills, and approve the activity account per the consent agenda. Chairman Scollard assumed the motion.** Under public comment, Johna Zumbrun presented comments she received from Debbie Seibert and Catherine Frazer about policy 2123 on lesson plans.

Superintendent Feddes reported Craig Buscher, our consultant with the Continuous School Improvement Grant, was here August 25th and again on September 10th. Principal Zumbrun has completed his plan of improvement. As part of the Comprehensive Literacy Grant Shawna Heiser was here on August 21st. Kim Beatty was here on August 25th for a PAX Leadership Training. The spectator policy has gone through some changes allowing for more spectators and will continue to be updated as conditions change. There are currently 55 students in the elementary. Principal Zumbrun updated the board on enrollment numbers. There are currently 50 students in the junior high and 73 students in the high school. He and Finis Sandlin attended the Fishtail School Board meeting to discuss bus routes. Heidi and Chris Gunderson were recognized for becoming certified by ACT. There were three students at the junior high and high school level attending through distance learning and that has since dropped to two. MAP testing is continuing. The Stillwater County Sheriff's Department has a School Resource Officer that will be available for area schools that are not able to supply one for themselves. Deputy Renn Crane will be filling that position. Miss Montana, Jessica Criss, came and visited the junior high and high school physical education classes to discuss self-discipline, goal setting, and healthy choices. Flint Rasmussen visited our school to discuss career choices.

Athletic Director Chris Gunderson provided a written report that was read by Supt. Feddes. Football has 14 players and volleyball has 22 players. This week is homecoming week. We are distributing the video of our home games through NFHS website which is the only site that is approved by MHSAA to distribute video of athletics.

Colton Young, President of the Student Council, was present to speak to the Board about how the beginning of school was going for the students, how they are handling the new school guidelines related to Covid-19, and update the board on how the students are trying to keep Homecoming as normal as possible within the rules they are given.

In new business, the board had the fourth reading of the 2000 series policies. **Esp/Young moved remove policy 2113 and 2413P from consideration. Motion carried.** No action was taken on policy 2123. **Arthun/Pasecznyk moved to approve the following policies with revisions: 2140 remove #3; 2170 add 8-12 to grades allowed, remove #2, and use option 3 in item #4; 2240 add K-12 behind district in line 7 and remove line 11; 2332 remove or permit line 33, remove line 34-35, on pg2 remove or permit line 7, and remove 9-10; 2334 use option 1; and 2410P use 24 credits, dual credit - option 2, on pg. 2 choose administration on line 30. All trustees voted in favor. Arthun/Young moved to approve policy 2110, 2130, 2151, 2151F, 2163, 2164, 2166, 2167, 2170P, 2221, 2221P, 2320, 2322, 2335, 2410, 2420, and 2500 as written. Motion carried.**

Elementary Board members were each assigned a classroom to attend to discuss career options. Chairman Scollard asked if the board members had found any changes that needed to be made to the board goals that have been discussed at previous meetings. Finding no changes, **Ekwortzel/Von Nieda moved to accept board goals as written. All trustees voted in favor.**

Supt. Feddes presented two elementary out of district attendance requests for students living in the Nye area that she recommended for approval. **Arthun/Young moved to approve two out of district attendance requests for students living in the Nye area. All elementary trustees voted in favor.** Next, she presented one from a student living in the Columbus area. This student has chosen the remote learning option and has not always been able to attend online due to network connection issues creating complexities in delivering adequate education opportunities. Supt. Feddes recommended to offer the student to attend in-person or not accept the out of district attendance request. **Von Nieda/Young moved to offer the student to attend in-person or the out of district attendance request would not be accepted per the recommendation of Supt. Feddes. All elementary trustees voted in favor.**

A letter of resignation was received from Tonya Steffenson for the paraprofessional position and was read aloud by Supt. Feddes. The letter is attached as part of the minutes. **Ekwortzel/Pasecznyk moved to accept resignation from Tonya Steffenson as a paraprofessional. Motion carried.**

Supt. Feddes made recommendations to fill the Transportation Director and Traffic Education positions. **Von Nieda/Pasecznyk moved to offer a contract to Finis Sandlin for the Transportation Director position and hire Steven Morales for the Traffic Education position. All trustees voted in favor.** Supt Feddes recommended Sarah Kornick for the elementary paraprofessional position. **Arthun/Young moved to hire Sarah Kornick as an elementary paraprofessional. All elementary trustees voted in favor.**

In policy updates, Supt. Feddes explained changes needed to emergency policy 1905. **Arthun/Young moved to revise policy 1905 with option 1 physical distancing and option 1 face covering with the optional provision. Motion carried.** Next, she explained changes to policies related to Title IX that were being replaced and added. Due to the fact that they are required policies they could be accepted on the first reading. **Pasecznyk/Ekwortzel moved to replace policies 3210, 3225, 3225P, 3225F, 5010, 5012, 5012P, 5012F. Motion carried. Von Nieda/ Arthun moved to approve additional policies 3226, 3310, 5015. All trustees voted in favor.**

Supt. Feddes read a letter from Chere Juisto with the Montana Preservation Alliance about the Sandstone building. Andy Simpson spoke about what the Save the Sandstone Committee has been doing. They are working towards covering the utilities and maintenance as well as coming up with ideas for uses of the building. There is a Facebook fundraising page. Chere Juisto spoke about the Montana Preservation Alliance's commitment to help the Save the Sandstone Committee. After a great deal of discussion, the Board agreed to allow the Save the Sandstone Committee to have until May to work on a feasibility study as long as the utilities and maintenance costs are covered.

Principal Zumbrun presented the discussion he had with the Fishtail School Board and options they discussed. The Fishtail School Board decided not to reconsider their bus route for this year. Principal Zumbrun recommended that the Nye route return to the pre-existing route and the Absarokee School adjust the individual transportation contracts for families that live on the West Rosebud Road and Fiddler Creek. **Royce/Pasecznyk moved to accept Principal Zumbrun's recommendation to return the Nye route to its pre-existing route and adjust the individual transportation contracts for families that live on the West Rosebud Road and Fiddler Creek Road. Motion carried.**

It is required that the school have an Annual Progress Report on the Continuous School Improvement Plan. Supt. Feddes recommended having this report done by John Sullivan who has done this report for the school in the past. **Von Nieda/Arthun moved to approve the agreement with John Sullivan for the Continuous School Improvement Plan - Annual Progress Report. All trustees voted in favor.**

A rental contract for a tractor from C & B Operations was presented by Principal Zumbrun. **Ekwortzel/Young moved to approve the rental agreement with C & B Operators for a John Deere Tractor for the 2020-2021 school year. Esp abstained. All other trustees voted in favor.**

In public comment, Merrill Ostrum commented on a Facebook post from Rick Young and would like the board to think about the grandparents and great grandparents wanting to go to ball games. He mentioned that school students are choosing to go to Columbus. Mr. Ostrum would also like a sound system improvement at the football field. Tonya Steffenson spoke about Columbus attendance rules. She also asked about correcting the minutes of the board meeting concerning her and the Transportation Director position. She did not sign a contract and she does not believe it should be considered a resignation. Brande Young would like the board to thank Tonya Steffenson for her years of service. Diana read thank you cards from Jordan Hicketier and Joan Howe. Brian Young spoke about the Homecoming Parade and that some parents did not agree with the decision to just put the floats at the football field. He asked if the parents could hold the parade without the school being involved. With no further business, **Ekwortzel/Pasecznyk moved to adjourn at 8:34 pm. Motion carried.**

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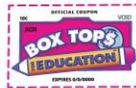


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