

Home of the Huskies

Issue # 6

February 2021

Superintendent's & HS Principal Report by Meredith Feddes

We have entered the second semester with school still up and running. The district appreciates the staff and student's efforts to follow protocols in order to keep the doors open.

The governor's new directives:

GENERAL MASKING REQUIREMENTS

A statewide mask mandate remains in effect, as follows:

1. A face covering that covers the mouth and nose shall be worn at all times in indoor spaces open to the public. Face coverings shall be provided for all employees and volunteers. All points of entry open to the public shall have a clearly visible sign posted stating: "Mask or face covering use required for ages five and older."

2. For any organized outdoor activity where social distancing is not possible or is not observed, a face covering that covers the mouth and nose shall be worn at all times.

3. The following are excluded from the Directive:

- a. children under the age of five.
- b. persons consuming food or drinks in an establishment that offers food or drinks for sale;
- c. persons engaged in an activity that makes wearing a face covering impractical or unsafe, such as strenuous physical exercise or swimming;
- d. persons seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired;
- e. persons giving a speech or engaging in an artistic, cultural, musical, or theatrical performance for an audience, provided the audience is separated by at least six feet of distance;
- f. persons temporarily removing their face covering for identification purposes;
- g. persons required to remove face coverings for the purpose of receiving medical evaluation, diagnosis, or treatment; and
- h. persons who have a medical condition precluding the safe wearing of a face covering.

4. Accommodation must be made for those entitled under federal and state disability protections, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Montana Human Rights Act, labor laws, or other applicable law.

5. Businesses, other persons responsible for indoor spaces open to the public, and sponsors of organized outdoor activities are entitled to reasonably rely in good faith on the representations of employees, volunteers, contractors, customers, visitors, or members of the public regarding the applicability of the exceptions in section 3 above. Reasonable, good faith reliance on such representations is an affirmative and complete defense to any enforcement proceedings brought pursuant to this Directive.

Applicability: In the interest of uniformity of laws and to prevent the spread of disease, all inconsistent local government health ordinances or orders are preempted by this Directive, but only to the extent they are less restrictive.

The Braly Family Foundation has continued Henry's wish to help schools. Mr. Yates was awarded a grant for the hydroponics system he requested, Mrs. Royce for her life cycle project of hatching eggs, and Mr. Mullen for a community mural painting project. Congratulations to these individuals. These projects will make the learning process fun and engaging. Thank you to the Braly Family Foundation for supporting education in Absarokee.

The district continues to have our Comprehensive Consultant, Craig Buscher, and Literacy Consultant, Wayne Callender here to help improve instruction. They are both working on assisting with the Multi-tiered System of Support. This is meant to enhance the learning of students of

all levels. Staff have worked closely with the consultants to implement requested changes. We will have our winter benchmark testing done and have completed data meetings to determine progress by the first week of February. New programs implemented will be evaluated as well as instructional practices to determine progress and needed changes.

There will be additional COVID funds for the district known as ESSER II. These have already been allocated to the schools, but have not been received as of this writing. The funds will again be used for the purpose of maintaining staff and overall operations. It also specifically allows technology, site-based needs, cleaning supplies, mental health services, summer and supplemental learning, and school facility repairs and improvements to reduce virus transmission and to improve indoor air quality.

 **Elementary Principal News** *by Mr. Zumbro*

Today marks the first day of the new semester and that means we are half done with the school year! I am so thankful that we've been able to keep the doors open at our schools and the number of COVID cases in Stillwater County seems to be going down, so that is promising. (Keeping my fingers crossed here!) As I write this submission, it is also my first day as the Principal in the Elementary School. I didn't expect this change of venue, but life can throw a curve once in a while and unexpected things happen. My promise to everyone is to work hard and do my very best to support the students and staff in this building as we continue the work of educating our most precious resource... Our children!

Throughout the morning, I've been greeted by lots of smiles and many little voices saying "Hi Mr. Z". The greetings and smiles are a good way to start one's day and they can certainly warm the heart.

I look forward to getting to know the elementary students and staff a little better, as we work together over the next several months. During my 25 years in education, I've never been a teacher, nor an administrator, at the elementary level. I will have a lot to learn from these children and staff members at the Elementary and I look forward to doing just that! The schedule is a lot different than at the junior high and high school and that's going to take some getting used to. For the past 24 years, I've heard bells about every 53 minutes or so and kids moving about the halls. I must say... "It's a lot quieter here!"

In addition to the students and staff, I look forward to getting to know the parents better as well. Please don't be afraid to stop by the school and introduce yourself, as I'll welcome the opportunity to visit with you. We've all probably heard the saying "It takes a village to raise a child". Nobody knows your child better than you do. Please let me know how we as an elementary school staff can serve your child better.

Please remember that junior high boys' basketball includes 5th grade and practice begins on February 15th. Students must have a current physical on file in order to participate. February 15th is also the last day for students to turn in box tops for the "Box Top Challenge". Mrs. Sandlin is offering an award to the class that brings in the most box tops. Finally, mark your calendars for February 18th as an "early out". Students will be released at 1:30pm and there will be no school on Friday, February 19th due to the District Basketball Tournament.

 **Yearbook and BPA News** *by Chad Baver*

The Yearbook Staff needs Senior Pictures and Senior Baby Pictures for this year's graduating class. These can either be sent electronically or delivered as a physical photo. Electronic photos can be sent to Mr. Baver (baverc@absarokee.k12.mt.us). Physical copies can be brought into the school and dropped off at the front office or Mr. Baver's room. All physical photos will be scanned and returned to you in original condition. Thank you.

Business Professionals of America (BPA) competed in Regional competitions virtually throughout the month of January. This included both individual and team events. These competitions will decide who gets to go on and compete at the State level. Our prospects look strong and we should have good representation during the State competition.

 **Elementary Robotics News** *by Nicki Reissig*

It's that much anticipated time of the year again, Robotics Time! We will be doing our Lego Robotics program on Tuesdays after school until 4pm beginning on Tuesday, January 26th. We will have sanitizing protocols in place and be using the same precautions as during regular school hours. Consent forms and a schedule have been sent home with students. Please check the Remind App or our school Facebook page for any changes. Please let me know if you have any questions. I am so excited to see our little engineers at work!

 **Stillwater Valley FFA and Shop News** *by Mr. Yates*

FFA News

The FFA chapter members have been busy working on their FFA record books. The Seniors have been working on their Montana FFA State degrees and filling out scholarship applications. Colton Young spent two days at the Gold Conference on January 15th and 16th in Billings. The Gold conference is for Juniors and Seniors that plan to run for a state office. He spoke with former National President Koleson McCoy about how to do state officer interviews. He also learned about career success and how FFA has given people the opportunity to have very successful careers.

On January 18th Max Andres and Garcie Tooke did a chapter visit. The officer team and some of the chapter members did a workshop on things we can do as a chapter and a community to have a positive impact in the times of covid.

We are working on having some of the FFA District contests in person and on March 9th we are planning on hosting Southern FFA District Livestock Evaluation and Veterinarian Science.

Shop News

Instead of shop news this month, I have greenhouse news. The plant orders are in and plants will be delivered the first week of March. In the next few weeks, we will be starting with germinating plants from seeds. I applied for a Braly Family Foundation Grant. I received a \$2000 grant that will be used to purchase a hydroponics unit that will be a part of the greenhouse. I want to thank the Braly Foundation for supporting my Ag. Education program.

 **High School Robotics Team News** *by Heidi Gunderson*

Robotics Team Finally Competes!

The robotics team first scrimmage will be held Saturday, February 20th. This will be a virtual scrimmage, our first ever! We are excited to see how the virtual scrimmage will work and how our robot will measure up against the competition. Our robotics team members are Monique Mondragon, Dillon Ferster, Callen Gunderson, and Allison Howes. Way to go Huskies!

 **Visual Arts** *by Matthew Mullen*

High School Beginning Studio

Oil painting and Lino-cut media have been popular in the high school choice-based studio. Students are starting progress on their 5th major project. They are learning to experiment with media and to find their own style.

Advanced Art Studio- Students have demonstrated significant skill development in the areas of advanced observational drawing approaches. They are also exploring new subject matter ideas such as landscapes and abstract compositions.

Elementary- Fifth grade students are working on clay animal sculptures inspired by Inuit artworks. Grades K, 1, & 2 students are learning the basics of Chinese writing. They have learned the stroke order of writing Chinese characters.

There will be an update to the online photo gallery of student artwork from this fall semester. Keep an eye on the Absarokee School Facebook page for more info.

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

GUITARS!! GUITARS!! GUITARS!! Mrs. Seibert was able to solicit a donation of a classroom set of acoustic guitars for her Choir members!! 18 "Easy-play" guitars were delivered and it was like Christmas as we opened them. Tuning them is grrrreat pitch practice and students are learning to accompany their own voices with rhythm and chords!!

Kudos to all the music students who courageously performed their Christmas solos, duets and large group pieces in front of their classmates at the awards assembly! With the new semester, both Band and Choir students are beginning preparations for Festival Competitions. The plan is to possibly bring the judges into each individual school depending on continuing restrictions.

Pep Band is excitedly awaiting the time when we will once again be able to play for the Basketball games while 3-4th graders will soon begin RECORDERS!! Our Huskies are impressive in their musical skills, for sure!!

"Introduction to the Performing Arts" is the DRAMA class offering this new semester! Be on the lookout for an end-of-the-year performance if restrictions allow!! Go HUSKIES!!



Board of Trustees Meeting *by Tanya Lester*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING – December 14, 2020

The Board of Trustees of School District 52 & 52C met at a regular meeting on Monday, December 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, Mike Pasecznyk, Eric Esp, Terry Ekwortzel, Joshua Royce, Superintendent Feddes, Principal Zumbrun, and Clerk Tanya Lester. Trustee Justine Dawson was absent. Also present were Steve Simonsen (on-line), Jessica Griffin, Heidi Gunderson, Chris Gunderson, Brande Young, Keara Young, Shelly Noe, Johna Zumbrun, Brian Young, Mindy Young, Catherine Frazer, Jordan Hickethier, Josh Boyce, and Afton Lamoreaux. After standing for the pledge, Chairman Scollard recognized all visitors.

There were no agenda changes. Per the consent agenda, **Arthun/Ekwortzel moved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 regular board meeting, pay elementary bills, pay high school bills, and approve the activity account. Chairman Scollard assumed the motion.**

In her report, Supt. Feddes asked the board to move the principal evaluation to February. She also would like to do the hiring of fall and winter sports in April, and the spring and new hires in July or August to keep the newspaper releases to a minimum. Supt. Feddes updated the board on some changes to the school-to-work program due to some unusual circumstances this year. She congratulated Mr. Zumbrun on his career in the military and upcoming retirement. 2019-20 Staff Members of the Year were recently honored by the Stillwater Boosters. They were Mr. Yates in the junior high/high school and Mrs. Cross in the elementary. The elementary will be having three dress up days before Christmas. All activities on the 23rd will be in the classroom this year due to Covid19 restrictions. MAPs and DIBELS testing will be taking place the first two weeks of the new semester to stay in line with other schools receiving the Literacy Grant. A grievance has been filed, investigated, and a resolution will be given soon. The union has given notice that they would like to negotiate salaries. Supt. Feddes gave an update on enrollment numbers.

Principal Zumbrun started his report with a thank you to the Absarokee Care Bears for their visit today. FFA attended John Deere Ag Days. Trevor Zumbrun received a national FFA grant for his SAE project. Congratulations were given to Colton Young for post season football awards and Keara Young for post season volleyball awards. December 8th the school conducted a canine drug inspection and is pleased that there were no findings from the search. MAP assessments will begin January 18th in the junior high/high school. The National Assessment of Educational Progress has been postponed until the spring of 2022. According to an Office of Public Instruction (OPI) news release, Absarokee was one of 121 schools in Montana with 8th grade students originally scheduled to take the math assessment. The OPI is in discussion with the Department of Education as to whether the state standardized tests will occur in the spring. Montana uses Smarter Balanced and the ACT.

Athletic Director Chris Gunderson updated the board on the decisions that were made at the District 6C meeting. Basketball practice started December 7, 2020. The first game is scheduled for January 2, 2021. Junior high girls just finished their basketball season. Congratulations go out to the coaches and players on a very successful season. The "A" team went undefeated and all the team members improved their skill level from the start of the year.

The student council report was read by Chairman Scollard. It included an update on their food drive last month and plans for the Christmas party. There is also a plan for a lesson on fatalities in teen driving.

Trustee Young introduced Josh Boyce to present two proposals for a sound system at the football field. Proposal 1 - \$2,629.81, Proposal 2 - \$1,829.81. There will also be a \$500 cost for consulting, training, and tuning. **Young/Arthun moved to accept proposal #1 for \$2,629.81 for a football field sound system. Motion carried.**

On the third reading of the 8000 series, **Young/Arthun moved to approve 8121 with lines 12-14 removed, 8123 with option 1, 8320, and 8420. All trustees voted in favor.**

There is an estimate for paving the two ends of the high school parking lot. It is being considered to seal the parking lot at the same time, but the cost for the sealing is not available at this time. **Young/Pasecznyk moved to table the paving and sealing project until all of the cost estimates are available. Motion carried.**

The school has on hand enough carpet to cover two rooms. It will be necessary to abate the asbestos once the current carpet is removed. **Von Nieda/Young moved to approve the asbestos abatement and carpet installation in two rooms in the elementary. All elementary trustees voted in favor.**

The air handling system in the junior high hallway in the high school building is next on the list of facilities projects. During discussion it was requested to get more information on which funds will be used to pay for the project and how much is in those funds. **Young/Ekwortzel moved to table update of the junior high air handling system for more information. Motion carried.**

A new application for a substitute teacher was presented to the board for approval. **Von Nieda/Pasecznyk moved to add the substitute to the list as recommended. Motion carried.**

Peterson's Quality Office delivered a printer contract proposal to the school. There are approximately 20 months left on the current contract with Terrell's. **Ekwortzel/von Nieda moved to table the decision on the printer contract until closer to the end of the Terrell's contract. Chairman Scollard assumed the motion.**

Supt. Feddes brought two different letters written in support of the Sandstone Committee. She read the letter she recommended. Afton Lamoreaux spoke about the goals of the Sandstone Committee. Steve Simonsen spoke about why the letter and copy of the minutes were needed. After a great deal of discussion about what the Board was willing to support, **Arthun/Young moved to approve the letter in support of the Sandstone Committee recommended by the superintendent. All elementary trustees voted in favor.**

The board considered using the Governor's Coronavirus Relief Funds for work that was performed outside the duty day for certified staff. The classified staff would receive an essential worker stipend. The payment would be a one-time payment of \$500.00 for full-time employees and prorated by full-time equivalency for part-time employees. **Esp/Pasecznyk moved to approve a one-time payment for work that was performed outside the duty day for certified staff and an essential worker stipend for classified staff as proposed. All trustees voted in favor.** A copy of the memorandum of understanding with Absarokee Education Association will be attached as part of the minutes.

The first reading of the 7000 series started with a recommendation to remove policy 7431 as it was no longer necessary, **Arthun/Royce moved to delete Policy 7431 as recommended. Motion carried. Von Nieda/Arthun moved to approve the required policies 7330 with a wording change and 7330F. All trustees voted in favor.** The board continued with discussion of the remaining policies.

In Public Comment, Shelly Noe asked about kids transferring to the Columbus School and commented that 10 boys' basketball players will result in only 20 Absarokee fans in the gym during boys' basketball games. Jordan Hicketier congratulated Tim Zumbrun on 33 years in the military and thanked him for being a great role model and leader at our school.

With no further business, **Young/Pasecznyk moved to adjourn at 8:30 P.M. All trustees voted in favor.**

**Absarokee Schools
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BOXHOLDER

TRUSTEE POSITIONS OPEN

The following board positions will be open on the Absarokee School Board District 52 & 52C for the May 4, 2021 school election: Two 3-year terms on the elementary board, one 3-year term on the high school board in the Fishtail District, and one 3-year term on the high school board in the Nye District. The deadline for filing is Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 4:00 P.M. Forms may be picked up from Tanya Lester, Business Manager at the high school office and returned to the same. Elections will be held on May 4, 2021 at the following locations: Absarokee Elementary Gym, Roscoe Community Center, Fishtail School, and Nye Fire Hall.
If you have any questions, please contact Tanya Lester at 328-4583.

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

If you are not currently registered to vote, you must be registered by Monday, April 5th in order to vote in the May 4th school election. Registration forms can be picked up at the Absarokee High School office or Stillwater Clerk & Recorder office in Columbus.