MCPS Native American Student Services

Indigenous Insighter

February 2026

MCPS Staff Shareouts



I work in 3 elementary schools and each school is doing different activities. I introduced stick-game to the students; we watched a video giving a brief history of the game. I showed them all the pointing signals, and they were ready to play. I taught a lesson on bison, the next week I brought in the bison box so they could feel and see what all parts of the bison were used for. Our IEFA instructor Keila did a clay bison project with the students and this week I will have a final lesson and teach about the Iniskim(buffalo stone).

At both my middle schools we started beading lanyards. When the sun shines, we head outside and play basketball during lunch. At one school the students really liked stick-game. They wanted to make their own sets for home so I got the materials together and we made them.

At Big Sky it was a very busy February. We have biweekly Rise meetings on Wednesday and also check in with students. We started Big Sky's first ever drum group and we had 6 practices before our first gig. The students performed the flag song in front of a packed house on senior night; Lance started us off with the Blackfeet Prayer in our Blackfeet language. The seniors had a fry bread fundraiser and ended the night with dancers at halftime, it was a great way for our indigenous students to show their culture, be proud of who they are and where they come from.

MCPS Native American Student Services
909 South Ave W.
Building B, Rm 120
Missoula, MT 59802

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

Xest Sxlxalt Pesya
Good Day Everyone



February was an awesome month.
We started out the first week of the month with creating our own Winter Counts based on events in our lives. My students really enjoyed this project! I am glad that we were able to solidify what we learned the previous week through a hands-on activity.
The following week, we created a beaded heart with pony beads and pipe cleaners for Valentine's Day. During the project, we discussed what was used before the introduction of glass beads.
The third week of February, I talked to my students about each reservation and tribe in Montana. We discussed the names of each reservation and the names each tribe calls themselves.
In the last week of February, I visited with my Lowell students about the reservations and tribes in Montana. I sure missed my Lowell students as there was no school the last two Mondays! For the rest of my schools, we played a game that describes the characteristics of each tribal flag in Montana. My students really enjoyed playing that game, and were interested the entire time we played it.
I look forward to the coming months!







February went by fast and it was a busy month.

Willard: I was only at the school twice this month due to not having school on two Mondays. I got to meet with the new incoming students. In the next month we will get going on beading projects.

Sentinel: I have been working with the admin to get us a classroom for when I'm there on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for RISE. So far we got a room every other Wednesday for the RISE group to meet in their school building. We will be setting up the officers meeting and getting some fundraising going.

Washington: Checked in with some students about grades. Girls are still sewing on their ribbon skirts and getting excited. A couple of them are close to being done and looking forward to the next project.

Hellgate: We got some new students to attend their office hours in my classroom. They are beading lanyards, keychains, and making earrings. Thanks to Ms Hanford for getting the supplies needed.

Lewis and Clark: Students are finishing up chokers. We are talking about different dance styles and if they would like to learn. We will be having a Pizza Party at the end of the month.









Hello, everyone! February really did fly by. I was able to represent our department at Sentinel's Freshman night on the 4th. The next Monday was the Education Summit where educators were able to attend classes on various topics. I learned a lot that day in my sessions on Implicit Bias and Generational Learning. I also had the most fun making mini moccasins in Trena's class. She is a great teacher and our students are lucky to have her as a specialist.



I continue to work with teachers to provide resources and create lessons. I try to build relationships with individuals so that they will feel comfortable asking questions and finding authentic activities to enhance their teaching. SHS teacher Henry Sulzbacher and I are currently working on a unit of study, titled **"The Creator's Game: A Journey through the History and Spirit of Lacrosse. "** This unit explores the 1,000-year history of the sport, from its Haudenosaunee origins to its modern global presence. I am really excited about this and hoping to make it something that teachers across the district will use with the students and everyone will enjoy. I am also working on Indian Education for All connections for the novel, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, which is the ONE READ novel choice for Sentinel High School, next year. Lastly, I have been facilitating an online class on Anti-Indigenous Bias. There are several other things in the works as well, so stay tuned.

Okii (Blackfeet / Piikani)
?e-?a (Salish / Séliš-Qlispé)
Kahée (Crow / Apsáalooke)
Pevehe e'seeve'e (Northern Cheyenne / Tsis tsis'tas)



A *few* February happenings:

- Listening to Chef Sean Sherman's ,Oglala Lakota tribe, passionate & compelling lecture on activism, advocacy, Indigenous food sovereignty with a focus on revitalization & evolution of Indigenous food systems. We loved seeing Val & Giselle Forrest wrap Sherman in a gorgeous Star quilt they created.
- Featured "Artist, Scholar, Community Maker & Advocate" Molly Murphy Adams, Oglala Lakota descendant, specializing in contemporary sculptural beadwork, made time to connect with MCPS families for the annual "Meet the Artist" event.

- Ms. Molly also spent a day presenting professional development at MCPS' 4th Annual Summit. Ms. Molly discussed how Indigenous art was historically relegated to non-art status & the impacts this had on k-12 education.
- Making & teaching mini Moccasins!
- Learning how to make "Yaya Dolls" from Three Chief's Education Specialist, Nadia Askan.
- Creating Ledger Art with Hellgate students during their "Diversity Week".
- Exploring Indigenous heritage through clay with students & teachers at Chief Charlo, Paxson, & Franklin.
- Facilitating with Charlie, "Recognizing & Countering Anti-Indigenous Bias" professional development.
- Participating in the "Native American Resistance for Everyone" course.
- Building authentic relationships & IEFA capacity within MCPS.
- Our RISE students are awesome! Michele Henson, Tribal Student Achievement Specialist with OPI, invited Braydon Falcon and Surreya Wallowing to present at the MACIE (Montana Advisory Council on Indian Ed) board meeting on March 4th. They will represent the "non-rural / urban" school perspective to the MACIE board.

February is always a fast & busy month. I will part with a few quotes to ponder...

- "I was in love with the whole world and all that lived in its rainy arms." — *Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe)*.
- "We do not want riches but we do want to train our children right... We want peace and love." — *Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota)*.
- "Teach us love, compassion, and honor that we may heal the earth and heal each other." – Ojibwa prayer.

With Abundant Gratitude,
Keila Cross







Monthly Events:



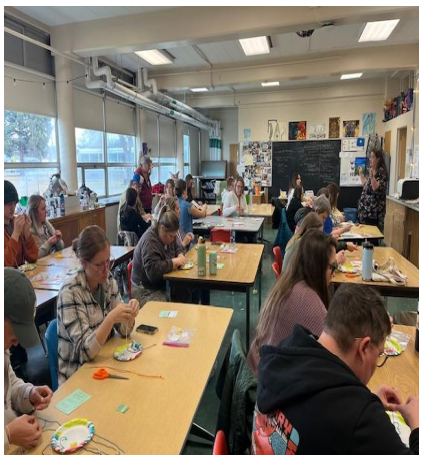






Student dancers and singers at the Big Sky/Sentinel crosstown game.
Lance Comes at Night offered a prayer. The drummers sang an honor song for the Seniors.







NASS staff, MT OPI and local consultants taught sessions at the all district Education Summit.

Monthly Events:



YAYA dolls with Nadia Askan from Three Chiefs Cultural Center



MCPS NASS Parent Advisory Committee

All parents and guardians of Native American MCPS students are encouraged to attend PAC meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

2025-26 PAC

Parent Representatives:

- ★ Matt Bell
- ★ Julie Cahoon
- ★ KaylaBeth Charlo
- ★ Lyman Ferguson
- ★ Chad Villegas
- ★ Shauna Yellow Kidney

Student Representative

- ★ Seth Martin
- ★ Lance Comes at Night
- ★ Joshua Na

Teacher Representative

- ★ Alyssa Johnson



PAC meeting
3/4/2026
6 pm
MCPS Admin B
909 South Ave
West

Taco soup and tortilla chips.

Bring something to share.

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT SERVICES

> > 2025-2026 NASS School Assignments and Contact Info< <

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	ASSIGNED SCHOOL
KEILA CROSS	1049	KCROSS@MCPSMT.ORG	ALL ELEMENTARY
CHARLIE STRUNA	1068	CSTRUNA@MCPSMT.ORG	MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS Seeley Lake High School
LEIGH MALATARE	1047	LMALATARE@MCPSMT.ORG	Franklin Elementary School, Big Sky High School Jeanette Rankin Elementary Rattlesnake Elementary Meadowhill Middle School CS Porter Middle School
ALI NORTH	1050	ANORTH@MCPSMT.ORG	Paxson Elementary Lowell Elementary Chief Charlo Hawthorne Elementary Russell Elementary
TRENA OLD PERSON	1028	TOLDPERSON@MCPSMT.ORG	Willard Alternative School Hellgate High School Sentinel High School Washington Middle School Lewis and Clark Elementary
BILLIE JO JUNEAU	1063	BJUNEAU@MCPSMT.ORG	

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT SERVICES

> > 2025-2026 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR < <

EVENT NAME	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Back to School BBQ	Monday, Aug. 25	5-6:30 pm	MCPS Admin B
American Indian Heritage Day Round Dance	Friday, Sept. 26	6 - 9 pm	C.S. Porter Middle School
SEPTEMBER 26: AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY (MONTANA)			
SEPTEMBER 30: ORANGE SHIRT DAY - NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE (US/CANADA)			
OCTOBER 13 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY (US)			
Halloween Carnival	Tuesday, Oct. 28	6 - 8 pm	Franklin Elementary School
NOVEMBER: NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH			
Moccasin Making Workshop	Monday, Nov. 3 Monday, Nov. 10	5:30-8 pm	MCPS Admin B
Earring Making Workshop	Monday, Dec 8 Monday, Dec 15	5:30 -7:30 pm	MCPS Admin B
Bingo	Wednesday, Jan. 14	5:30-7:30 pm	MCPS Admin B
YaYa Dolls Workshop	Monday, Feb.12	5:30 - 7:30 pm	MCPS Admin B
Pouch making Workshop	March 19	5:30 - 7:30 pm	MCPS Admin B
Native Youth Powwow	April 25	12 - 10 pm	Sentinel High School
MAY 5: NATIONAL MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS' AWARENESS DAY (US)			
Native Graduates Senior Dinner	Tuesday, May 19	6 - 8 pm	TBA
End of Year Celebration	Tuesday, June 2	5 - 6:30 pm	Sentinel High School

Missoula County Public Schools
Native American Student Services



WE ARE LOOKING FOR HELPERS:

Join our team! Work with our Native Youth to keep culture alive through singing, drumming, and dancing. We are forming a troupe

Do you have the knowledge to teach?

DRUMMING/SINGING
DANCE STYLES
HOW TO MAKE REGALIA





Responsibilities:

- Teach songs to our musicians
- Help students make outfits and pieces
- Provide mentoring/support to students
- Teach powwow ettiquette
- Teach dance steps and styles

Qualifications:

- Experience participating in powwows
- Willing to work with students after school and/or weekends
- Reliable and punctual
- Willingness to be part of a team

Interested?

email Billie Jo Juneau
bjuneau@mcpsmt.org

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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POUCH MAKING WORKSHOP



Create a Medicine Pouch with Trina Fyant and the NASS Department!

March 19th
5:30 - 7:30 PM

909 South Ave. W
Missoula, MT 59801

Admin Building B
Professional Learning Lab

Limited Spots Available

REGISTER NOW

To sign up, please email Billie Juneau @ bjuneau@mcpsmt.org