

## BNAS Board Report

August 2024

### Summary of Activities:

#### 1. Resource Allocation:

BNAS has provided the staff with a comprehensive range of resources, including word lists, lesson plans, and various educational supplies such as paper, pencils, fabric, beads, drums, and drumsticks. We are entering the new academic year with enthusiasm and a strong focus on language development.

#### 2. Language Assessment Collaboration:

Under the leadership of Lea Whitford, BNAS has been coordinating with Montana Digital Academy (MTDA) to streamline the language assessment process. MTDA has updated its interface, which our contact, Anna East, is optimizing for our use. While the assessment won't be available at the start of the school year, we anticipate it will be operational before the end of the first quarter.

#### 3. Starlab Initiative:

The BNAS Starlab, known as \*aiikoō•koōsii\* (meaning "when it is dark"), continues to be a highlight of our educational offerings. Other schools within the district have expressed interest in utilizing the Starlab for special events, and we look forward to sharing this unique experience with them. Additionally, this summer, the BNAS director introduced MSU students from a food sovereignty group to the Starlab, receiving high praise. Both Bozeman and Missoula house full domes, and it is in our best interest to visit them. Missoula's dome is located on the UM campus, while Bozeman's is in the Museum of the Rockies.

#### 4. Weekly Language Content:

This year, we will feature a "Word of the Week" series on our BNAS YouTube page, with new videos uploaded at the beginning of each week. As a trial, two videos have already been uploaded using a puppet format. We currently have over 30 videos prepared, with plans to create special content for weeks that coincide with holidays.

#### 5. Potential Collaborations:

BNAS has developed strong working relationships with EGPS, DLBS, the University of Montana, and the larger Blackfoot Confederacy. EGPS, DLBS, and UM have staff trained in our Blackfoot Language Curriculum and are utilizing portions of it in their teaching. Recently, the BNAS director was approached by representatives to explore a collaboration with MSU Bozeman on introducing GIS (Geographic Information System) into tribal and rural communities. The goal would be to design a GIS curriculum at the high school level, providing students with a head start in higher education and equipping them with skills applicable to various fields, particularly those involving data collection.