

BNAS Board Report - May 2024

BNAS had an extraordinary year, marked by significant achievements and recognition. We had the honor of celebrating the accomplishments of renowned Blackfoot actress Lily Gladstone and are proud to have the Montana Teacher of the Year, Kevin Kicking Woman, as a member of our department. This school year has demonstrated the rising prominence of the Blackfoot language among our students and staff. We are thrilled with the growth of our department and excited for the future.

Language Growth and Assessment:

Our department has seen a remarkable increase in the usage and production of the Blackfoot language by both students and staff. Although our full assessment analysis is still in progress, we can confidently report substantial improvements. These findings will be shared in an upcoming oral presentation.

OIE Visit and Recognition:

On May 14-15, the Office of Indian Education (OIE) visited our department to highlight us as exemplary recipients of the Native American Language (NAL) grant. Their visit included a professional filming crew who documented our department's achievements in data, research, and professionalism. They visited all K-4 immersion classes, Kevin Kicking Woman and Shaylea Tatsey's 7th block class, and interviewed all BNAS staff along with Superintendent Corrina Guardipee-Hall.

Additionally, EGPS teacher Liny Racine, who attended our summer professional development in 2023 and uses the BNAS curriculum to teach the Blackfoot language at EGPS, was interviewed. This showcased the broad influence of the BNAS department, extending beyond our school and reaching across the reservation. Furthermore, Haley Running Crane, the Blackfoot Language Instructor at the University of Montana, also utilizes our curriculum, emphasizing our widespread impact.

Upcoming Events:

The larger Blackfoot Confederacy has shown interest in our work. On June 20th, the BNAS Director, Robert Hall, has been invited to speak at the Blackfoot Language Symposium in Standoff, Alberta on the Blood Reserve. This invitation is a testament to the value and recognition of our efforts within the broader Blackfoot community.

Conclusion:

The BNAS department is proud of its achievements this year and looks forward to continuing to foster the growth of the Blackfoot language and culture among our students and staff. We are committed to maintaining our high standards of excellence and expanding our influence in the future.