

Alternative Education Board Report May 2017

At the Buffalo Hide Academy, we recognize that with pressure, comes stress, and the only way to relieve this stress is to provide a lot of opportunities for support. For our students who are teen parents and experience the stress that comes with balancing school and parenting, we offer many supports. These include a weekly teen parent group that offers the time and space to share the joys and struggles of being a teen parent. We also work with many community agencies and programs, such as the Blackfeet Man-Power Teen Parent Coalition and BPS Childcare, to support our teen parents. We recently invited Lita Pepion, Nutritionist, in as a guest to share healthy nutrition for babies and toddlers. We learned that Cheetos, in fact, may be “kid-friendly, but not mother approved” in terms of not being a healthy snack option.

The Buffalo Hide Academy has been abuzz with twenty (20!) seniors preparing for graduation and beyond. Of the 20, two students will enlist in the Marines and the other 18 have declared college as their post-secondary plans. The majority (twelve) of our college-bound seniors have chosen Blackfeet Community College as their first choice with the intent to transfer once they’ve earned an associate’s degree.



We want to celebrate just how extremely hard our seniors have had to work in order to reach this milestone in their lives. Over half of our seniors have experienced significant trauma since childhood; a quarter have experienced significant grief/loss; over one third have experienced homelessness; almost a quarter are teen parents; and 70% are being raised either by single parents or grandparents.

And they have amazing attitudes. And they have ambition. And we're going to miss them.

Students from the Buffalo Hide Academy traveled to MSU in Bozeman as special guests of the Education Department. Our students presented on the benefits of a Trauma Informed School and using Blackfeet culture and values in the curriculum.



We are also very proud of our outdoor planters that will soon be bringing us turnips, carrots, beets and a host of other herbs and vegetables. Our science classes are cultivating the crops and learning soil science as they go. We also shared two raised beds, seeds and soil with the Browning High School Vo-ed department.



We have also been busy preparing our students for the Junior ACT which was held earlier this month at Browning High School in addition to the pre-test sessions we took this opportunity to It is our expectation that our counseling department teach classes in order to have a pro-active approach to dealing with student issues and to keep students engaged in the classroom and minimize the time that they are in crises mode. Youth Mental Health First Aid, Olweus Bullying Prevention, Parenting Skills, Career-Portfolio class and Social Skills are some of the offerings that we teach as counselors.

We are also committed to using the MBI process to create a welcoming, safe and productive school environment for our staff and students. In addition to implementing the plan with consistency a few key areas of focus for us are:

- Creating a system to track our Behavior Interventions and support so that we can measure for effect.
- Formalizing a reward system, this has three parts, (1) Consistent, timely and specific praise for students showing exceptional behavior and work (2) More frequent recognition of improvement for students who show growth and resilience (3) Student led honor assemblies on a quarterly basis.
- We are also going to implement a society based system that will allow the older students to mentor the younger students next year. These Societies will do project based learning, community service and provide support and representation in school based decisions. The goal of the Society system is to allow staff to have a small amount of students to support and develop a positive relationship with.

Each semester Charlie and Nikki Hannon (counselor – BLA) offer the Honor Group as an elective to Choices and Blackfeet Academy students. The Honor Group is a grief and loss group which provides stabilizing support as students reconstruct their lives after the death of a loved one. In addition to honoring and remembering family and friends that are no longer with us, students learn coping skills, various resources that are available in the community, and healthy ways to move forward and re-engage in life.

Our main goal at PC is to create a school atmosphere that promotes attendance and meets the needs of our diverse student population. As a graduation matters school, we believe in the power of establishing a welcoming school environment where kids want to go to school. Our staff is friendly, supportive, and eager to help our kids meet their goals.

Students playing traditional games at All Chiefs Park

