

# **Buffalo Hide Academy Board Report**

## **Charlie Speicher**

### **10/7/25**

#### **New York Trip - Musical Collaboration with By Norse**

In September, a small delegation from BPS (myself, Kevin KickingWoman, Robert Hall, Nick Rink, and Colin Sibbernson) traveled to New York City to meet with representatives from the By Norse record label to begin planning a long-term musical collaboration between BPS and the international heavy music community. The meetings focused on creating sustainable partnerships that provide authentic, creative opportunities for our students—including a plan for our student interns to work behind the scenes at the Fire in the Mountains Festival next summer. One of the most inspiring outcomes of the trip was the development of an initiative to feature Blackfeet singers on the next album by the Norwegian band Enslaved, a collaboration that will bridge cultures and celebrate Indigenous strength and creativity on a global stage. This partnership has the potential to generate profound hope, inspiration, and meaning for our at-risk students by showing them that their voices, stories, and talents belong on the world stage.



#### **International Recognition for BPS**

Buffalo Hide Academy (BHA) played a central role in the development, planning, and successful execution of the Fire in the Mountains Festival this past summer. Through months of preparation, BHA staff and students collaborated closely with festival organizers, artists, and the wider heavy music community to ensure that the event not only celebrated Blackfeet art and music but also carried a meaningful message of healing and resilience. Much of this groundwork took place during the joint BHA/BHS Heavy Music Symposium course last spring, where students studied the intersections of culture, creativity, and mental health while training for their on-site internship roles. The results were extraordinary—our students thrived in professional settings, built global connections, and represented Browning Public Schools with pride. The project drew significant international media attention, with features in ABC News, Rolling Stone, High Country News, Flathead Living Magazine, and several other outlets, all highlighting the innovation and courage of our students and community.



### **Hush Pod @ BHA**

This fall, Buffalo Hide Academy installed a new Hush Pod, a soundproof and confidential space designed to give students private access to telehealth counseling services. The pod has already been well utilized by students seeking a safe, comfortable environment to connect with licensed mental health professionals. This addition directly supports our ongoing mission to increase access to mental health care, reduce barriers to support, and ensure that every student has the opportunity to receive the help they need in a setting that feels secure and respectful.



### **Strengths Based Suicide Assessment and Intervention**

In partnership with the University of Montana's Clinical Psychology Department, Browning Public Schools will host a two-day Strengths-Based Suicide Assessment and Intervention Workshop for all district counselors, clinicians, and principals. This

workshop will be facilitated by Dr. John Sommers-Flanagan and Dr. Tammy Knolleson, both instructors at UM. It will occur (pending your approval!) at Buffalo Hide Academy in November.

The training provides 15 CEUs or one graduate credit through UM and is designed to equip staff with the skills and confidence to respond effectively to students experiencing suicidal thoughts or crises. While counselors will apply these interventions directly, principal participation is vital to ensure strong leadership support and understanding of the scope of this critical issue. Unlike traditional, deficit-focused models, this strengths-based approach emphasizes resilience, coping mechanisms, connection, and benevolence—helping staff guide students toward safety and healing by focusing on their inherent strengths and protective factors.

### **New Long Term Sub @ BHA**

We have a new long-term sub at BHA - the wonderful Sharon Tucker has joined us to support our kids in Math instruction. Sharon has decades of experience working with our kids, and we couldn't feel luckier that she's decided to sort-of step out of retirement to help us out. She's smart, she's a great communicator, and she instantly identified ways to connect with our kids and build healthy relationships. Welcome to the BHA squad, Sharon!

