

## **BHA Board Report Dec 2023**

### **Sharing Spaces with BES**

Mr. Lang, the health and PE teacher at BES, went out of his way in December to make sure BHA knew the BES gym would be available in the afternoons for a week early in the month as a result of his health unit. Usually elementary students enjoy their PE specials at that time, but for this week we took full advantage of the space, getting our students to participate in a variety of physical activities including stretching, running, basketball and other team sports, and favorite of all, dodgeball. It was great to have some consistent time running and playing in the gym and we noticed a boost in overall good vibes at the end of each day in addition to a rise in attendance by the end of the week as a result. Thanks, Mr. Lang!



## Deepening our students understanding of our unique historical context

Our social studies and english curriculum at BHA continues to explore our unique historical context as Blackfeet people and how it influences and affects our lives today. We've received great feedback from students since implementing this specific curriculum last year and we've continued to tune and add to what we've got so far. Student comments typically reflect surprise and appreciation of paradigm shifting understandings about the unique challenges we face here as a community as a result of examining it in the classroom. They also typically articulate a deeper desire to contribute to the broader community in ways that will help, often rooted in traditional values such as respecting, protecting, and caring for our young children, and building relationships with the dogs in our community. Here is an example of one of the handouts students examined in their social studies class this December:

### Stages of Colonialism

The methods & history of colonization are unique in every case, due to many different variables (geography, population density, resources, etc.). Despite this, there are common patterns that can be easily recognized. In the Americas, Africa, and Asia, colonization generally consisted of 4 stages: recon, invasion, occupation, and assimilation.

#### **1. Recon**

Colonialism begins first with small recon forces that map out new lands or regions and gather intelligence. These are often celebrated today as voyages of "exploration" & "scientific discovery." The 1492 voyage of Columbus, for example, was a recon expedition to find a new route to Asian markets. There were only 3 ships: the *Pinta*, *Nina*, and the *Santa Maria*.



#### **2. Invasion**

The second phase is invasion, which begins a period of armed conflict as Indigenous nations resist colonial forces. For example, when Columbus returned to the Caribbean in 1494, he had 17 ships and over 1,000 conquistadors. Invasion can begin immediately after the recon, or may be delayed by a period of trade & settlement that serve as a basis for later invasion (i.e., N. America). In every case, colonial military strategy is genocidal and includes the destruction of food supplies, resources, & shelter, as well as massacres & biological warfare (disease).



#### **3. Occupation**

When Indigenous peoples are militarily defeated, the occupation is expanded. A colonial government is set up to control the surviving population of Natives, who are contained in reservations, or enslaved. By the 1700s, many colonial authorities were corporations (i.e., the Hudson's Bay Company, French Senegal Company, etc.). They organized settlement & resource extraction, including the construction of railroads, dams, roads, ports, etc.

#### **4. Assimilation**

An important part of imposing control is the indoctrination of surviving Natives into the European system. In order to do this, Indigenous society & culture must be dismantled & erased as far as possible. Colonial violence, including physical destruction and biological warfare, achieve this through depopulation, often during the period of invasion. Once occupation is entrenched, this process becomes institutionalized, with generations of Indigenous youth being removed from their people & forced into government or Church-run schools.



The period of occupation and assimilation are connected, as only through occupation can systems of assimilation be imposed. This phase can be long and drawn out over centuries, as has occurred in the Americas.



### **More success with drum making**

Students had time to continue traditional projects in December including drum making. This project has been especially meaningful to students and the timing of this round of drum making made it even more so. Multiple students expressed how excited they were to present the drums they made to family members as a Christmas gift.





A few other highlights of December include our field trip to the bowling alley in Cut Bank to celebrate our students achievement so far this year, and the last school project we did before the break - tie dye - which has been a consistent fun and engaging activity at BHA over the last few years.





