

BNAS Board Report – September 2025

BNAS Curriculum

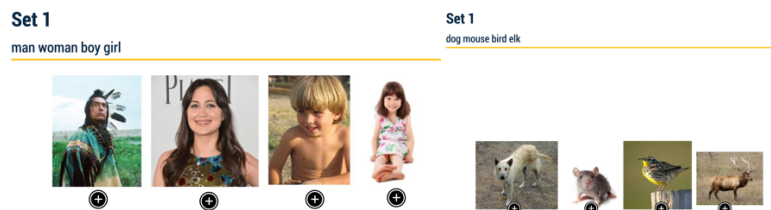
On September 10, the BNAS Department hosted a meeting with the district's instructional coaches. Together, we reviewed three key elements of our Blackfoot language teaching methods:

- The phonetic Blackfoot writing system
- Color-coded interactive word lists
- ASLA (Accelerated Second Language Acquisition), a 100% oral-based approach

This meeting gave coaches a hands-on introduction to each method and marked an important step toward creating greater consistency across grade levels and school buildings. Ensuring fluidity in language instruction is essential to building a strong, connected pathway for students.

Collaboration with Montana Digital Academy (MTDA)

On September 18–19, Anna East from Montana Digital Academy joined us in Browning to launch new collaborative projects. One exciting development is the recording of the first two ASLA sets, which are being formatted to include visuals of target words alongside Blackfoot spelling and audio. This interactive format will provide instructors with accessible tools to support oral and written language learning.



The plus signs below the picture, when clicked on, reveal the Blackfoot spelling of the word and an option to play the word's audio

Another project currently in development is a lesson on bird sounds. Students will hear audio recordings of birds such as the chickadee, crow, magpie, and bald eagle, paired with visuals and the corresponding Blackfoot words. These lessons are anticipated to be completed in October. Our partnership with MTDA and Anna East will continue beyond these projects, building capacity for future curriculum resources.

Suicide Awareness Month

BNAS partnered with Charlie Speicher, Director of Buffalo Hide Academy, to produce a 12-minute video highlighting *what gives people hope*. Featuring students, faculty, and staff from both BHS and BHA, as well as district staff, the video was shared on the Browning Public Schools Facebook page. It has since received nearly 9,000 views and 49 shares.

A shorter 3-minute version was also created and has reached 2,300 views. The intent of these projects was to spotlight the strength, beauty, and resilience of our community. The overwhelmingly positive feedback reflects the importance of uplifting stories and celebrating the

good that surrounds us. This collaboration and project spearheaded by Charlie Speicher has also received praise from John Sommers-Flanagan, professor of counseling at the University of Montana in a blog post on September 21st on his webpage johnsommersflanigan.com

BNAS Field Trips

From September 16–19, immersion students in grades K–5 participated in a Berry Field Trip to St. Mary, led by Glacier National Park Ranger Jordyn and Loren Racine from the Pikani Lodge Health Institute’s *On the Land* program. Students learned about culturally significant plants, how to identify them, and their role in the ecosystem. Traditional Blackfeet stories enriched the lessons, connecting knowledge of the land with cultural teachings.

- **Kindergarten & 1st grade** students visited the 1913 Ranger Station, explored native plants, learned bird identification through sound, and engaged with animal furs and antlers to deepen their understanding of local wildlife.
- **Grades 2–5** visited St. Mary Campground, where they identified berries, played traditional games, and practiced recognizing plants on a nature walk. Before picking, students followed Blackfeet cultural protocols by offering prayer and an offering. They proudly brought home berries to share with their families.

These trips provided meaningful, hands-on experiences that connected classroom learning to the land, culture, and traditions of the Blackfeet people.



