

August 2025 BNAS Board Report

The new school year began with great energy in the BNAS office. On August 18, we hosted our first official department meeting of the year, where we reviewed our goals and aspirations and shared reflections from the summer. Having a large, dedicated meeting space has brought renewed enthusiasm to our team, creating a place where we can learn, teach, and grow together.

BNAS continues to collaborate closely with the other departments in our building, including IT and Food Services, as we develop a cohesive plan for sharing our space. We are especially grateful to Teri DeRoche, who has taken on new duties for the BNAS office, including requisitions and communication support. She has already made valuable contributions, such as ordering signage for the building.

We are also pleased to welcome Jo Ann Powell into her 30th year with the district as our new BNAS Instructional Coach. Jo Ann and I began working together in June, and we have now established shared goals for the year. These include refining the Blackfeet Language curriculum by grade level, building an instructional framework to support teachers, strengthening BNAS presence in Babb and Colony Schools, and creating a welcoming and cheerful atmosphere in the BNAS space. We have also begun developing new instructional worksheets, with a sample attached for review.

On August 14, during extended contracts, our department created a guiding statement:

“We aim to rejuvenate the usage of our language by integrating modern and ancestral teaching methods, with an emphasis on cultural empathy. We express our identity, strengthen our communities, and honor our past and future. Guided by the wisdom of our elders and knowledge keepers, we seek to build meaningful partnerships by inviting learning, healing, joy, and humor into every step.”

We also wish to highlight the importance of adopting a district-wide spelling system for the Blackfoot language. Establishing a consistent writing system strengthens student learning and provides clarity for educators. While our journey with the language has been deeply meaningful, differences in spelling and pronunciation have sometimes led to confusion or discouragement. We recognize this not as a fault of individuals, but as part of the history and challenge of reclaiming our heritage language.

A unified writing system helps address these challenges by reducing misunderstandings, fostering consistency across all grade levels, and providing a supportive framework for teachers. It also ensures that concerns about spelling or usage are addressed collectively by the district, rather than directed at individual educators.

Also included are pictures of the new building

