

## BNAS Board Report – October 2025

### Overview

October has been a productive month focused on planning and preparing for several new initiatives within the BNAS Department. We are pleased to share that a Cooperative Services Agreement (CSA) with *Montana Music Vault* has been approved. Through this partnership, we will begin developing media and video projects centered on teaching the Blackfoot Language. These projects will include “Word of the Day” videos, music videos (with the goal of recording songs in collaboration with students), and filmed games featuring student participation.

In addition, we are refining our existing Blackfoot word lists to make them more user-friendly and accessible. As part of this work, we are updating the imagery used in our ASLA pedagogy materials to ensure higher-quality and more effective visual support for language learning. These updates will soon be shared across the BNAS team.

### Assessments

We have officially begun administering BNAS assessments, which are designed to focus entirely on Blackfoot Language proficiency. Each assessment consists of two parts:

1. **Production** – Students are asked to produce Blackfoot words or phrases orally.
2. **Comprehension (Cognitive Recognition)** – If a student is unable to produce a word, they are assessed for understanding. For example, if shown several images—including one of a horse—a student who says *pō’nōkäämiitā* correctly demonstrates production. If the student cannot produce the term, the assessor says *pō’nōkäämiitā* aloud, and if the student correctly identifies the image, they demonstrate cognitive understanding.

This two-step approach is critical because it provides a fuller picture of each student’s learning. Even if a student cannot yet produce the language fluently, they are developing the ability to understand and respond—key skills for building a competent audience for fluent speakers.

As of this report, assessments are fully completed at **BES** and **Napi**, approximately **50% complete at BMS**, and **40% complete at Bullshoe**. Each student is assessed individually. An example of our assessment format is provided at the end of this report.

### Starlab Presentations

We have begun *Starlab* presentations at Bullshoe Elementary, giving students a chance to experience Blackfoot cultural and astronomical knowledge in an engaging, interactive format. These sessions are being adjusted to best suit the attention span and learning styles of younger students.

Plans are underway to schedule additional presentations at other schools in the district. Specific dates are still being determined, but our goal is to ensure every student has the opportunity to participate.

