

With the ending of the 2017-18 school year we prepare for next school year and look forward to more work within our language. For myself, this was a tough year- toughest year of my life when factoring in my personal life. As for my work at BPS I feel as if I could have done more and been more involved in our language classes. Nevertheless, for joining the team moments before the school year started I believe I did well in a world that, as we all know, has many interesting attitudes. With respect to teaching and learning the Blackfoot language we are aware we need more help, that there is a lot of unconstructive criticism, there is also a lot of blind praise, and there is much territorial reactions teaching methods, primarily with respect to dialect and writing. I bring this up to give an idea of the paradigm of language revitalization and the different fronts the BNAS program conducts battle.

I am very proud of this years staff and the attitude most have displayed and their fight to teach and promote aspects of niitsiitüpyäaḡii (Blackfoot ways) that they understand, feel, and believe. Also, we have massive improvements to implement and I have spent the last years explaining, training, and helping our BNAS staff (and larger BPS family) to adopt, understand, and accept a uniform writing system that ensures accessibility to language for students from k-12 and beyond. We have had training in the writing system by the creator of the writing system, I have created a video that explains the sounds and symbols of the writing system with succinct precision, we have compiled a spread sheet showing the issues and problems that have occurred in our schools (and larger language revitalization efforts) due to the inconsistency and non-strategic writing example of our past and present. It is also important to note that the BNAS director has made it clear that they will write all words for all staff to ensure consistency and accurate representation of the Blackfoot sounds as produced by verified fluent speakers.

I know next year that there will be more opportunities to engage in the necessary classes while also maintaining the connection I have made this year with the Blackfeet Junior Academy, William Buffalo Hide Academy, and the BHS Human Rights Club. Year one is a learning year, a year to plant the seed, year two is the growing year. I am grateful for this position and opportunity to aid in teaching our language and experience the love and growth of our youth within these schools.

I hope to make it to Babb more often and have already talked to its' principal. I hope to make it into every language class, at the very least, once a week (mainly to help and enjoy students). I am blessed and thankful for the support and kindness I received at the Admin building every day. I would not have been able to perform my job without every single person who works in the Admin: Stacy Edwards, Linda Baker, Rose Racine, Jessica Rutherford, Everett Holmes, Teressa Rolands, Carlene Adamson, Dixie Guardipee, Sheri Blue, Corina Gaurdipee-Hall, Tracy Keller (even though she left mid-year), and my aunty Emmie Bird. I am so thankful to have stepped into a work environment where I have been treated very well.

Staff who is not within the BNAS I would have to thank are Amy Andreas, Pat Hagen, Pat Black Weasel, Gina Rink, Mathew Johnson, Nick Rink, Charlie Spiecer, and Jennifer Reed. These parts of the BPS have gone out of their way to help me in completing and enjoying my objective of promoting our Blackfoot ways. Thank you

It is important to note that this summer I will be a part of a grant awarded to BCC dedicated to language work. I was at BCC when we wrote the grant and I was also given objectives from this grant. I have declined pay for specific work from this because it would insure more money goes to speakers and have made the deal of the grant runner, Sterling Schildt, that the work I put in will mean that BPS can enjoy the materials that result from the grant instantly. Most meetings will be held on Saturdays. Along with gathering more resources, I have made the controversial decision to not return to the MIEA conference and use those moneys to hire fluent speakers to make recording and do Blackfoot Language training, I believe this is better for our staff and will be a strength with respect to saving our language.