

Alternative Ed. Board Report November 2016

During this report I want to specifically Hi-light some of the engaging classes being taught at the Buffalo Hide Academy and offered to all students.

Computers Class: Teacher- Troy Atchison

The class is where students learn about basic electronics, electrical circuits and computer coding through a series of hands-on projects.

In the first part students learn about basic electronics and demonstrate their understanding by build circuits using switches, resisters and light emitting diodes.

In the second part of the class students learn about transistors.

Students learn how transistors:

- Developed from the vacuum tube
- How they changed the world
- How they led to the integrated circuit and how the integrated circuit led to the modern central processing unit
- How all computers at their core are a series of transistors producing on/off messages (ones and zeroes)
- Students demonstrate their understanding by making circuits with transistors

In the third part students learn how to code an Arduino development board using the C++ programming language and build several circuits using their newly developed skills.

In the final part of the class students do a series of projects that culminates in the student building and coding a remote controlled car.



Nick Rink

Mr. Rink is currently teaching 4 classes: Student Success Skills, Blackfeet Studies, and 2 sections of English. His Blackfeet Studies class has focused on the Blackfeet in time, starting with traditional creation stories. Art WestWolf came in as a guest speaker to provide the traditional creation story in the Blackfoot Language. Then, he transitioned to an OPI curriculum about the Anzick boy, a 13,000-year-old burial site North East of Bozeman MT. He has Shane Doyle, the Crow historian who worked as the cultural consultant and directed the boy's reburial, scheduled to give a guest lecture to his class in mid-November. Recently, Mr. Rink has focused the class on representations of Blackfeet in today's media. He showed, among other things, a documentary made by Robert Hall, now a professor of the Blackfoot Language at BCC, about Rez Dogs, and invited Mr. Hall in to give a guest presentation about the making of and the intentions behind the film to the class.

In his English classes, Mr. Rink has focused on poetry and storytelling. His students have memorized multiple poems, including Robert Frost's "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening," and Lewis Carroll's "The Jabberwocky." They have also analyzed many poems written in the last 20 years by Montana Indians. Recently, Mr. Rink has brought in a professor from the English Ed. dept. at MSU, Bozeman, Dr. Robert Petrone, to brainstorm collaboration ideas. They are planning a conference at MSU this coming spring in which Buffalo Hide Academy students will present as experts on a topic of their choice to pre-service English teachers followed by a structured question/answer session, designed to give our students a voice and an opportunity to feel valued for who they are in a professional setting, and to help Dr. Petrone's students gain a better understanding of the profession they are training for. While Dr. Petrone was here, he also helped Mr. Rink bolster the curriculum and instruction he delivers in his classroom, and plans to provide continuing support to Mr. Rink as a first year teacher.

Trauma Informed Committee/CISM: The Trauma Informed Committee has been busy so far this year! We're currently working on scheduling a CISM training to support the efforts of our quick response team. The 2 day course will be an in depth training regarding school crisis'.... namely preparing for any incident by organizing our response team, and how to effectively respond to traumatic incidents. The training will also provide comprehensive information about caring for our school community in the weeks and months after a crisis.

The TIC also received feedback from staff in our respective buildings that more staff support is needed on a consistent basis, especially for new and struggling teachers. This realization further supports the notion that a trauma informed school places as much emphasis on creating a welcoming and supportive environment for staff as it does for our student population. In order to identify the needs of staff and students at each respective building, the TIC is in the process of developing a Trauma Informed Appraisal report.

ILC/Tamarack/Olweus: Our Independent Learning Center has quickly transformed into a safe, productive learning environment for our students that need additional academic support. Several BHA staff members met with HiSet prep officials in Helena recently and came away with knowledge and materials to supplement our efforts to prepare our students to take the HiSet exam or excel in their current classes.

In other news, the BHA counseling curriculum is moving full steam ahead by providing all of our students with weekly lessons and activities centered around themes of Anti-bullying, traumatic stress, study/life skills, and emotional/mental health. The Good Medicine program and Gear Up are supplementing our efforts in these endeavors which is much appreciated!

We're also excited to foster our important partnership with the newly established Tamarack Grief Resource Center. TGRC staff has already begun several grief groups at BHS and KW/VINA, and we're looking forward to integrating more grief recovery related curriculum into our efforts here with the help of TGRC.

Buffalo Hide Academy Enrollment

During first quarter of academic year 2016-2017, the Buffalo Hide Academy has served a total of 98 students with more being welcome in the coming weeks. There is one (1) Freshman; thirteen (13) sophomores; twenty-three (23) juniors and sixty one (61) seniors. Of the six students who are currently withdrawn, one is verified to have passed the Hi-Set test, two are pursuing their HiSet, and three are unknown.

We will be enrolling eight new students at second quarter to reach a total enrollment of #100. These students will be selected from the most recent Alternative Ed waitlist which is managed by one of the Buffalo Hide Academy counselors. The waitlist is populated based on official referrals from BHS Counselors and Administrators. Currently, there are 35 students on the waitlist.

Early Warning System

The Buffalo Hide Academy is currently using the Early Warning System to assist in identifying and recruiting students who are most at-risk of dropping out of high school. At this point, for example, there are eighteen (18) seniors who are identified as being “extreme risk” (having a 40% chance or higher of dropping out). Of these students, 94% (17/18) are referred to Alternative Ed and 78% (14/18) are currently enrolled with Alternative Ed.

The Buffalo Hide Academy is also able to use the Early Warning System to track whether or not a particular student’s risk of dropping out is increasing or decreasing. For example, in looking specifically at the eight (8) senior students in the “extreme risk” category who re-enrolled with Alternative Education from years 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, one (1) student experienced no significant change; two (2) students’ risk increased; and five (5) students’ risk decreased. This can be interpreted as, “75% of returning Alternative Education seniors experienced no change or a decreased risk for dropping out”.