



Indigenous Insightter



Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

Powwow Poster Art Contest

MCPS 6TH-12TH GRADE STUDENTS:

We are looking for MCPS students who would like to create a design that will honor our graduating seniors. The design will be used for our Native Youth Powwow poster. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Entries must be submitted by February 24, 2023. Submit your design to mfplumage@mcpst.org or call 406.728.2400 ext. 1049 if you have questions.

Inside:

School Assignments & Contact Info • P2

2022-23 Event Calendar • P3

Community Events & Resources • P4

Parent Advisory Committee • P5

NASS Updates • P6-P11



Missoula County Public Schools
Native American Student Services Department

SAVE THE DATE
2023 HONORING OUR GRADUATES
POWOW AND FEED

Attention 6th-12th Grade students:
We are looking for MCPS students who would like to create a design that will honor our graduating seniors.

Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Entries will need to be submitted by February 24, 2023.

Submit your design to mfplumage@mcpst.org or call 406/728-2400 ext. 1049 if you have questions.

APRIL 29, 2023
SENTINEL HIGH SCHOOL
MISSOULA, MONTANA

FOLLOW



 /mcpstnass

 @mcpst.iefa

 www.mcpst.org/iefa

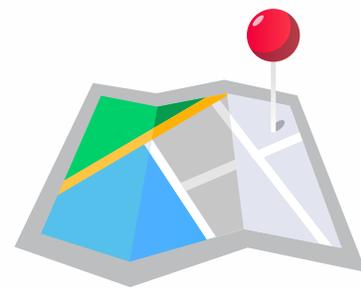
2022-2023 NASS SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS AND CONTACT INFO

Name	Title	Phone	Email	Assigned Schools
Glenda Weasel	Data Support Staff/ Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1063	gfweasel@mcpsmt.org	Paxson Seeley Swan HS
Ray Kingfisher	Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1047	rdkingfisher@mcpsmt.org	Hellgate HS CS Porter Washington
Melissa Hammett	Teacher/ Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1028	mshammett@mcpsmt.org	Sentinel HS Willard HS
Dacia Griego	Social Worker/ Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1068	dgriego@mcpsmt.org	Paxson Rattlesnake
Duran Caferro	Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1064	dcaferro@mcpsmt.org	Big Sky HS
Mary Plumage	Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1049	mfplumage@mcpsmt.org	Jeanette Rankin Russell Meadow Hill
Chayse Buckskin	Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1050	cbuckskin@mcpsmt.org	Franklin Lewis & Clark Lowell
Benji Headswift	Native American Education Specialist	ext. 1064	bheadswift@mcpsmt.org	Chief Charlo Hawthorne Jefferson

WELCOME

We are happy to welcome the newest member of the NASS team, Benji Headswift!

Benji is a Northern Cheyenne tribal member, Army veteran, and former Northern Cheyenne tribal council member. He graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Native American Studies.



909 South Ave W.
Building B
Rm 120

2022-2023 MCPS NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT SERVICES
 >> COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR <<

EVENT NAME	DATE	TIME	VENUE	CONTACT PERSON
DerRic Starlight, Indigenous Puppeteer	Wednesday, Sept. 21	6:30 - 8:30pm	UC Theater, University of Montana	Chayse Buckskin cbuckskin@mcpsmt.org
Traditional Belt Making Workshop	Friday, Sept. 23 & Saturday, Sept. 24	Day 1: 5-8 pm Day 2: 10am-5pm	MCPS Professional Learning Lab	Melissa Hammett mshammett@mcpsmt.org
SEPTEMBER 23RD - AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY (MONTANA)				
SEPTEMBER 30TH - ORANGE SHIRT DAY - NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE (US/CANADA)				
OCTOBER 10TH - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY (US)				
Halloween Carnival	Saturday, Oct. 29	2-5pm	Franklin Elementary	Dacia Griego dgriego@mcpsmt.org
NOVEMBER - NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH				
NOVEMBER 15 - ROCK YOUR MOCS DAY				
Round Dance	Thursday, Nov. 17	6-9pm	Meadow Hill Middle School	Ray Kingfisher rdkingfisher@mcpsmt.org
Winter Gathering	CANCELLED			
Sunday Funday - Powwow Club				
Native Youth Art Market	TBD	TBD	TBD	Dacia Griego dgriego@mcpsmt.org
Native Youth Powwow	Saturday, April 29	Grand Entry 12pm 6pm	Sentinel High School	Glenda Weasel gfweasel@mcpsmt.org
MAY 5TH - NATIONAL MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS' AWARENESS DAY (US)				
End of Year BBQ	Thursday, June 8th	TBD	TBD	Duran Caferro dcaferro@mcpsmt.org

**Events are subject to change. Visit our website for updates: www.mcpsmt.org/iefa*

Community Events & Resources

Your Community. YOUR VOICE.

The Parent Leadership Training Institute helps parents who care become parents who lead.



APPLY NOW! SESSION BEGINS MARCH 2023!

The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) is a **free civics and leadership course** that empowers parents and caregivers to become leading advocates for children.

Missoula PLTI is open to Missoula County parents, grandparents, foster parents and other adults who wish to improve the lives of children and families in their communities.

Participants are offered three phases of training:

- A **one-day retreat** to develop community within the group
- A **7-week course** on parent leadership, understanding your personal history, and building trust across differences.
- An **8-week study** of politics, policy, and media and local government. Each participant will be supported in developing their own community project to affect change.



Make a difference for children and families with PLTI.

IMPORTANT INFO

Applications Due
Sunday, February 26th, 2023

Community Building Retreat
Saturday, March 11th, 2023
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

First Class Session
Wednesday, March 15th

Weekly Sessions are held each Wednesday from 5:30-9:00 p.m.

Dinner is served 5:30-6 p.m.

All sessions held at the Missoula Public Library.

Missoula PLTI includes childcare, meals, and transportation support as needed.



APPLY TODAY!

Apply today using the QR code above or contact missoulaPLTI@missoulaunitedway.org for more information and to receive an application.



FIRST PEOPLES' MARKET

++ Sweetheart pop-up ++

INDIGENOUS ART, BEADWORK, HANDMADE ITEMS & MORE!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH
2PM - 5PM

MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Cooper Room A/B, 4th Floor)
455 E. Main St. | Missoula

Shop local, shop Indigenous at the First Peoples' Market.

Indigenous Made Missoula
www.indigenoumademissoula.com

Learn how your school can receive free school meals for every student!!

SCHOOL MEALS ARE FOR EVERYONE

ENGAGEMENT NIGHT

FEB 9TH
5:30-7 PM

1720 WYOMING ST

Dinner and Childcare provided

WE'RE CONNECTED SERIES:

SOUP & STORIES

5-7 PM on Zoom

The evening's schedule will be:

- 5:00PM: Lobby Opens
- 5:30PM: Intro, prayer, good words, song
- 5:40PM: Live cooking demo with indigenous food sovereignty and dietitian highlights
- 6:10PM: Cultural Story
 - January 23rd - Aspen Decker (Salish)
 - February 13th - Art Westwolf (Blackfeet)
 - February 27th - Faye Filesteel (Assiniboine)
 - March 13th - Freda Macarena's (Chippewa)
 - March 27th - Norma Wolfchief Gorneau (Northern Cheyenne)
- 7PM: closing

register at:
www.bit.ly/3iXVHY5

www.allnations.health
(406) 829-9515

Title VI Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Title VI Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is made up of parents, students, and teachers within the MCPS community. PAC meetings are open to the community and we welcome families and MCPS staff to attend.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month from 6pm to 8pm in the MCPS Professional Learning Lab (in Building B). Onsite childcare available.



2022-2023 PAC Members

Parent Representatives:

Amber Shaffer - Chairperson
Shauna Yellowkidney - Vice Chairperson
Stacie Brod

Teacher Representative:

Linsey Kuntz (Lowell)

Student Representative:

Alishon Kelly (Hellgate HS)

Alternate Student Reps:

Jaiden Crawford (Sentinel HS)
Shawndaya Butler (Sentinel HS)

Updates from the Specialists

As the Rez Turns by Mary Fran Plumage

Happy Winter!!! Happy New Year! As we go forward from here on out, it will not be long before the skies are blue and the grass is green. Which will bring us closer to the end of the year. Please continue to encourage your students to keep striving and achieving. Also, parents pat yourself on the back as you made the halfway point of the school year!

We have been learning Nakoda color words in some of the elementary classrooms. Discussing how important it is to learn another language and expand your knowledge. It is simply amazing how fast the students pick up on new words and retain the information.

Russell Elementary 4th grade class will be learning about the Round Dance in P.E. this month. Thanks to Mr. Benji for helping with that and singing for a great group of students.

I want to update the Meadow Hill Dreamcatchers lunch group that the NEW day is Wednesday. No more Thursdays. So bring your lunch and stop on by the small conference room right by the cafeteria.

Joke of the day:

What kind of animal has to wear a wig?

A bald eagle!

Áaaa Oki by Chayse Buckskin

Ahhh Oki,

I hope you all had a good holiday with your loved ones. This new year has started off strong as I have been spending more time at each school I've been assigned to. I will be continuing my read alouds with the K-2 classes and have been doing Montana Tribal Flags with the older grades. Something new I have been offering at the schools is a Lunch group where I'm planning to teach a lesson on Montana tribes. This group also helps bring the students who don't know each other together in a safe space. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Tânsi Nitôtêmak! by Dacia Griego

Tânsi nitôtêmak! Hello my friends! I am the department Social Worker and one of the Native American Education Specialists. I am currently assigned to Rattlesnake Elementary School where I host weekly lunch groups with Native students and work in the classrooms through the IEFA Read Aloud Program and collaborations with classroom teachers. I also host a 5th grade lunch group with Native students at Paxson Elementary School.

I look forward to spending time with the students at lunch groups each week where I get to hear about their day, learn about their interests and strengths, and encourage them to do their best each day in school and in the community. We are spending time learning greetings in Montana tribal languages and practicing introducing ourselves. We are learning about the Montana tribal flags at Rattlesnake Elementary School in preparation for a tribal flag ceremony where we will present the Montana tribal flags to be displayed in the school cafeteria. At Paxson, we are working on a land acknowledgment that will be read every morning during morning announcements. It is so inspiring to see the youth feel valued and empowered as we work on these projects!

Through my IEFA Read Aloud visits I have shared stories and teachings about long hair and specifically "Boys with Braids" using the book *Thunder's Hair* by Jessie Taken Alive-Rencountre. This winter I also read: *Awasis and the World Famous Bannock* by Dallas Hunt, *Finding My Dance* by Ria Thundercloud, *Kumak's Fish: A Tall Tale from the Far North* by Michael Bania, and *Beaver Steals Fire* by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. I have also visited classrooms to present on the Montana tribal flags. At Rattlesnake, I spent two days with all of the students teaching round dance and traditional games during their "specials" time.

This spring I'll be teaching about the seasonal rounds of the Anishinaabe and other Plains people, traditional uses of the bison, and Powwow 101 as we approach powwow season. I am also facilitating the District's Anti-Bias Working Group, IVALUE. Through this working group we will be hosting an anti-bias training series for MCPS staff where they will learn about historical trauma, recognizing our own biases, and responding to microaggressions and discrimination.

Finally, I'm so excited for our upcoming youth powwow. The theme this year is "Honoring our Graduates." We can't wait for our community to gather and celebrate!

Dacia Red Thunder Griego
Anishinaabe, Nehiyaw, Xicana | she/her
Native American Education Specialist/Social Worker
Missoula County Public Schools

Stoodis! by Duran Caferro

Hello!

I hope everyone had a great winter break with family! At Big Sky High School we are all set for the second semester. This is a good opportunity to stay caught up and prevent stress later on. I had to take some time away to take care of my health, but I look forward to getting back to our regularly scheduled programming:

RISE - a statewide Native student leadership group meets every other Thursday at 2:00-3:30 via zoom. We host a group in room 21 at Big Sky so we can attend together.

Morning Circles - I have partnered with a study skills class to host a talking circle every Monday at 9:00-9:20. I will also lend one-on-one academic support on Wednesday and Friday.

Big Sky Native American Study Lab - Room 21 is our affinity space provided to help our students have a space to get work done, access resources, host our programs and meetings, and feel safe and supported. Students may come in before the bell or at lunch Monday-Thursday and say hello. Students or caretakers may also send me an email to schedule a meeting if those times are difficult.

Regular school day	Room 21
Monday	8:45-end of lunch
Tuesday	8:45-end of lunch
Wednesday	8:45-end of lunch
Thursday	Beginning of lunch-4 (RISE every other week)
Friday	8:45-11

Students are also lending their expertise to the planning of the Montana Office of Public Instruction Youth Days Conference. Youth Days is a conference for High School students to learn leadership and community service skills. Students play a major in planning the event, including some Big Sky Native Leaders, so it is shaping up to be meaningful and inclusive. The conference is scheduled for April 16 and 17 at the Holiday Inn - Missoula. Email me for information on attending or joining the planning team.

I am working on getting a direct phone line at Big Sky. For now, please contact me via email if you have any questions or concerns.



<<<< Scan to hear from students on some of the work we do at BSHS!

Creatively Indigenous by Melissa Hammett

- Willard lunch club: Every Wednesday
- Check-ins with Willard students and Sentinel Students
- Sentinel days: Tuesday afternoons
- Willard: Personal Finance class 1st period and Native American Studies class 2nd period.
- Sentinel: Study Skills class 7 th period.
- RISE meetings for Willard and Sentinel every other Thursday.
- NASS Department (Mary Fran, Glenda and family and I) made Frybread for Willard's 2nd block graduation at Willard.

Melissa Hammett, M.ED.

Data Guru by Glenda Weasel

Tansi:

The beginning of a New Year 2023. Welcome back to school. The holidays were too short. LOL. I can't wait to meet and greet with the students.

I will be starting at Paxson Elementary on Wednesdays.

I meet with Seeley Swan in person once a month on Tuesdays. The other Tuesdays we meet virtually using Google Meet. I have a great group of students at Seeley Swan High School. They are very engaging.

Everyone stay warm during our winter months and stop in and visit with the Native American Student Services staff.

Glenda Weasel

Oki Niksookowaaksi Tsa Niitaapi? by Ray Kingfisher

Okii Niksokowaaks,

I hope you all had a great holiday season. Now that it is over we are back to the grind. I am employed as one of the seven (7) "Native American Education Specialists." I am scheduled at C.S. Porter Middle School, Washington Middle School and Hellgate High School. The Native American Student Services has undergone some new leadership, structure and schedule. This new structure allows for the specialist to be on the campus of one school for the entirety of the school day, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. Leaving Mondays and Fridays for meetings, home visits, planning, debriefing, sharing content, and preparation.

Here is a glimpse of what a day at the school would look like. I report to the school around or at 7:30am. I sign-in with the front office to document that I am there in attendance. I make my way to the "space" that I am afforded. Once settled in and "Good Mornings" are said I log on my Chromebook and start to check and reply to MCPS staff emails. Upon completion I begin to look through my "Native American Student School List" of students. I use "Infinite Campus" on the MCPS Website, which allows me to observe your students behavior, schedule, grades, and attendance.

At Porter, I have sixty-two (62) students. At Washington, I have thirty-three (33) students and at Hellgate High School I have eighty-five (85) students that identify as Native American/Alaska Native. These students represent the twelve (12) Tribal Nations in Montana and many of the Tribal Nations around the U.S. I go through the list and begin to compile a smaller list of students who I will seek out and "visit" with. I do not have any training as a counselor or as a teacher. I use life experience, cultural background, knowledge and an education of the Native American experience to help the students understand and succeed.

In these visits I will ask a few questions in hopes of gaining some trust to build a Student/Mentor relationship. I find that the students need some sort of familiarity experience for them to allow that bond. I usually rely upon my coworkers for information and cultural expertise on different tribes other than my own. My research is limited to the internet as of now. During the visit, as an ice breaker, the questions I ask are, How are you? Are you related to...? Do you know? Have you lived in Missoula your whole life? What tribe do you represent? Do you play basketball? In an attempt to establish that familiarity, I will then use my experience and tell a short story with the information I receive.

Once established, I go over the information from “Infinite Campus” and show the student missing assignments, attendance record, and the grade they have in each class at that time. Ultimately, I encourage the NA students to do good and to “do the best that they can.” As we discuss the information sometimes the reason “why” the student is missing school, why they have behavioral problems or why they struggle is disclosed to me. Most of the problems are social ills that are produced from historical federal policies and experiences of Native American people. Today, we see that the NA students, families and Indigenous people are a product of those policies.

The job becomes hard as it switches to somewhat, “counseling/social work.” I get to hear the good, the bad and the ugly. Somedays, It takes a huge toll on my mental health and anxiety. When students trust me with information, I think, “Who would understand this situation from my perspective?.” So, the questions arise, “where do I take this information?” “Who do I pass this information to?” If I do pass this along “what happens to the trust I built?” “Am I getting my community members' kid taken away?” I always think “Could I be the only one that understands what/how/why has happened?” I possibly could be.

During lunchtime I host what I call “Native American Student Lunch Gathering” in each of my schools. In there, I encourage the students to eat, check in with them, tell a few corny jokes and start with the content. Videos are popular amongst the students. There are some great discussions of what did you see? What did you hear? How do you feel about it? It is always good to hear some of the basis of tribal knowledge and culture. They always say “This is what my dad/mom taught me.” I encourage them to continue to extract and learn all they can about who they are. It is always a good time when the student participates and brings that knowledge.

After lunch, I take care of any of the students' needs that come up. I do some research on any and all topics that the students talked about during that time. By doing this it prepares me for the upcoming gatherings with them. Knowing the students' likes and interests keeps that relationship building going. I will then get a start on the next day's lesson at the next school up. Overall our students are out there doing their best. I commend them for being there and doing what they can. I am hoping we can start getting some “Cultural Enhancement” going. Our students need that identity piece. I am hopes that we can all sit down at the table and figure out how that can be done.