Indigenous Insighter

MCPS Native American Student Services Department Newsletter. September 2022

# Welcome Back

The Indigenous Insighter is our department newsletter where we'll share updates from our staff, information about community events and resources, and highlight throughout the year. We hope your school year is off to a great start! We are all happy to be back in the office and in the schools visiting with all of you! We have a lot of classroom visits and community events planned for this year and we look forward to getting to spending time together. Feel free to reach out to one of our specialists if you have questions, ideas, or just want to say hello! Our contact information and school assignments are on the following page.

# 2022-2023 Staff Contact Information and School Assignments

* Glenda Weasel, Title VI Data Support, Native American Specialist at Seeley-Swan High School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1063
* Ray Kingfisher, Native American Specialist at CS Porter Middle School, Hellgate High School, and Washington Middle School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1047, [rdkingfisher@mcpsmt.org](mailto:rdkingfisher@mcpsmt.org)
* Melissa Hammett, Native American Specialist at Sentinel High School and Willard High School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1028, [mshammett@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mshammett@mcpsmt.org)
* Dacia Griego, Native American Specialist at Paxson Elementary School and Rattlesnake Elementary School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1068, [dgriego@mcpsmt.org](mailto:dgriego@mcpsmt.org)
* Duran Caferro, Native American Specialist at Big Sky High School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1064, [dcaferro@mcpsmt.org](mailto:dcaferro@mcpsmt.org)
* Mary Plumage, Native American Specialist at Jeanette Rankin Elementary School, Russell Elementary School, and Meadow Hill Middle School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1049, [mfplumage@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mfplumage@mcpsmt.org)
* Chayse Buckskin, Native American Specialist at Franklin Elementary School, Lewis & Clark Elementary School, and Lowell Elementary School; 406-728-2400 ext. 1050, [cbuckskin@mcpsmt.org](mailto:cbuckskin@mcpsmt.org)

# 2022-2023 MCPS Native American Student Services Calendar

* Native American Heritage Day Celebration: DerRic Starlight, Indigenous Puppeteer. Wednesday, September 21, 2022 from 6:30pm to 8:30 pm at the UC Theater, University of Montana.
* Traditional Belt Making Workshop. Friday, September 23, 2022 and Saturday, September 24, 2022. Day 1: 5-8pm, Day 2: 10am – 5pm. MCPS Professional Learning Lab.
* American Indian Heritage Day (Montana). Friday, September 23, 2022.
* Orange Shirt Day/National Day of Remembrance (US/Canada). Friday, September 30, 2022.
* Indigenous Peoples’ Day (US). Monday, October 10, 2022.
* Halloween Carnival. Saturday, October 29, 2022 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at Franklin Elementary School.
* Native American Heritage Month. November (US).
* Rock Your Mocs Day. Tuesday, November 15, 2022.
* Round Dance. Thursday, November 17, 2022 from 6pm to 9pm at Meadow Hill Middle School
* Winter Gathering. Friday, December 2, 2022 from 6pm to 10pm at Meadow Hill Middle School.
* Sunday Funday: Powwow Club. Every other Sunday beginning January 15, 2023 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at CS Porter Middle School.
* Native Youth Powwow. Saturday, April 1, 2023. Grand Entry at 12pm and 6pm at Sentinel High School.
* Native Youth Art Market. Friday, April 7, 2023. Time and location to be announced.
* Title VI Public Hearing. Date and location to be announced.
* Graduating Senior Dinner. Wednesday, May 10, 2023 from 6pm to 8pm at the DoubleTree By Hilton Hotel.
* End of Year BBQ. Date and location to be announced.

# Orange Shirt Day: Healing from Indian Boarding School Trauma

Trigger Warning: Indian Residential/Boarding Schools

Last spring news broke that the remains of 215 Indigenous children were found buried near Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, Canada. Since the gruesome discovery thousands of remains have been found at Indian Boarding Schools across Canada and in the United States. Researchers estimate tens of thousands of children died at the government and church-run schools in the United States. Our community is heartbroken by these findings, but unfortunately many are not surprised. For generations our people have told the stories and lived through the trauma experienced at Indian Boarding Schools. Our communities still face the impacts of historical trauma stemming from the forced removal of our children. Many of us are the children and grandchildren of Boarding School survivors. “Our communities are still mourning.” stated US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) in reference to Indian boarding schools. Initiatives have started in both the United States and Canada to uncover the truth and reconcile the trauma that occurred due to Indian Boarding Schools. In the coming months and years we will hear more about the tragic loss of life and culture our people experienced. The news and headlines shared on social media and in the news may be triggering for many of us. We encourage you to take care of yourselves physically, mentally and spiritually during these times. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you need resources to help process this grief. On September 30th, we will be recognizing “Orange Shirt Day” to honor the children lost and those who survived Indian Residential Boarding Schools. We hope that you’ll join us in acknowledging this painful history by wearing an orange shirt, learning more about the history and impacts of Indian Boarding Schools, and supporting initiatives and organizations aimed at healing from this trauma. Click on the links below to learn more about Orange Shirt Day and Indian Boarding Schools:

* [US Indian Board School History](https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/)
* [Interior Sec. Deb Haaland Announces Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative to Shed Light on the Dark History of the Boarding School System](https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/interior-sec-haaland-announces-federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative-to-shed-light-on-the-dark-history-of-the-boarding-school-system?fbclid=IwAR3eizrwG9O_lWjmRyzJOyJWkmUGKP5LO4jWIVY8EjkHw_WAkyui6Lmer1A)
* [CBC Kids: What is Orange Shirt Day?](https://www.cbc.ca/kids/articles/what-is-orange-shirt-day)

Books about Indian Boarding Schools

* Elementary Level:
  + Shi-shi-etko by Nicola Campbell
  + When We Were Alone by David A. Robertson
  + I Am Not a Number by Jenny Kay Dupuis
* Middle Grades:
  + Fatty Legs: A True Story by Christy Jordan Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton
  + My Name is Seepeetza by Shirley Sterling
  + The Journey Forward by Richard Van Camp and Monique Gray Smith
* High School and up:
  + Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese
  + 7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga by David A. Robertson

# 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. The Title VI PAC provides support to the MCPS Native American Student Services Department throughout the year and hosts the Native Senior Dinner at the end of each school year to honor that year’s graduating class of Native American seniors. 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).

Nominations for the 2022-2023 PAC are:

* Parent Representatives
  + Amber Shaffer
  + Chelsea Bellon
  + George Kicking Woman
  + Shauna Yellowkidney
  + Stacie Brod
* Student Representatives
  + Alishon Kelly (Hellgate High School)
  + Shawndaya Butler (Sentinel High School)
  + Jayden Crawford (Sentinel High School)
* Teacher Representative
  + Linsey Kuntz (Lowell Elementary School)

# As the Rez Turns by Mary Plumage

Hau Kona (Hello Friends), I am excited to be starting another school year with all our wonderful students and staff of MCPS. I am approaching my one year mark with the NASS department and my 7th year with MCPS! I am enjoying my co-workers and love getting my daily dose of indigenous humor. My schools this year are Russell Elementary, Jeanette Rankin Elementary, and Meadow Hill Middle School. I am excited to meet new students and see the old faces. I will be visiting classrooms and having lunch groups, so if you see me around just give me a wave or grab your tray and come join me for lunch. I want to encourage all students to make some goals as we start the new school year. For some this is your first year and some this is your last year in MCPS. Be thinking about what you want to get out of this year, month, week, or day. It doesn’t have to be something drastic, maybe you want to get better at math, join a club\sport, or make a new friend. Whatever your goal may be I BELIEVE IN YOU! I also encourage our families to continue teaching your cultural history at home. When I am in the classrooms I like to have everyone participate and we learn so much about one another through our cultural lifestyles. The teachers love to hear the students' way of life and so do the other students.

Russell has been working hard all summer on their community garden and I am excited to see some of our native plants growing as well. Soon we will add some signs with tribal language to identify the plants. Way to go Russell Bears! Meadow Hill Mustangs are starting Family Fridays! This will allow parents, relatives, caregivers, and family to join their students at lunch time. It will be a volunteer position and an awesome way to provide support to the staff during lunch time, as we know lunchtime can be a crazy time for students. If you would like to teach a game, play games, or just show up to have lunch it is a great way to spend your lunch hour. Meadow Hill will have a volunteer sign up on their school page soon. I will keep you updated on when this will start and when the sign up is available on the school page.

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. Now let’s have an awesome school year!!

Mary F. Plumage

# Ta[nsi](https://www.creedictionary.com/search/index.php?q=t%C3%A2nisi&scope=1&cwr=35218) N[itôtêm](https://www.creedictionary.com/search/index.php?q=nit%C3%B4t%C3%AAm&scope=1&cwr=29954)! by Dacia Griego

Tansi N[itôtêm](https://www.creedictionary.com/search/index.php?q=nit%C3%B4t%C3%AAm&scope=1&cwr=29954)! Hello friend! My name is Dacia Griego and I am the Native American Education Specialist at Paxson Elementary School and Rattlesnake Elementary School. I am also our department's social worker. I am Chippewa Cree and Mexican and I grew up in Butte, Montana. I'm an enrolled member of the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe and my pronouns are she/her.

At my schools, I will be continuing the IEFA Read Aloud program where I visit Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade classes to read stories written by and about Native Americans. I will also be visiting visiting grades 3-5 throughout the year for IEFA lessons and activities. [Part of my role as the department's social worker is to be an advocate for families to help connect to resources and support. Please let me know how I can help you have a successful school year. I look forward to meeting you all and I hope to see you at our events throughout the year!](https://www.creedictionary.com/search/index.php?q=nit%C3%B4t%C3%AAm&scope=1&cwr=29954)

# Stoodis! by Duran Caferro

Good Day Everyone! I hope everyone had a great summer playing outside and visiting around. I had the pleasure of reading about some of our students’ victories in academic and sports endeavors. Congratulations, and keep up the good work! It is good to be back in the school routine. I will begin this schoolyear by meeting students and families I haven’t met before and catching up with those I have. At Big Sky, I will have students scheduled in our own Advisory, where we will continue to build connections through a weekly student led circle. We will also have a small group study hall. Feel free to shoot me an email if you are interested in adding either of these to your schedule. I am in room 21 every regular Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in the morning through lunch. Have your Big Sky student stop by at lunch and say hello.

Duran Caferro (he, him, his)

# [*Á*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%82#:~:text=%C3%82%2C%20%C3%A2%20(a%2Dcircumflex,of%20the%20letter%20%22a%22.)*aaa Oki by Chayse Buckskin*

Oki, Welcome back Students and Staff!

My name is Chayse Buckskin and I’m one of the Native American Specialists with MCPS. I am from The Blood Tribe/Kainai Blackfoot Reservation in Alberta, Canada. I will be working directly with Lewis & Clark, Lowell and Franklin Elementary schools this year. I look forward to meeting all the new students and working with the great staff. Let’s iikakiimaat (Try Hard) and have an awesome school year!

# Data Guru by Glenda Weasel

Tansi:

Welcome to all our MCPS families. It has been a short summer vacation. I am glad everyone is in good health and is back to get into the SY groove of 2022-2023. We, the Native American Student Services (NASS) Dept., have jumped right in and have started a positive engaging start of the school year. I am already into the wonderful world of data and all it entails.

The MCPS Native American Week was another success and in the record books. Thanks to Native American Specialist Chayse Buckskin for being the team leader on this event.

I would like to thank and welcome all of our Missoula collaborators in which we will be working with this SY 22-23.