

# **TASUNKE WITKO OWAYAWA**

## **Crazy Horse School**

### **Board Members:**

Francine Red Willow-President  
Dawn Moves Camp-Vice President  
Sue Yellow Elk-Member  
Valerie Adams-Member  
Cornell "Dutch" Controy

**Dr. Margo Heinert, Superintendent**

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Dear Crazy Horse School Parents and Families:

After more than 50 years as an educator, I have decided it's time to retire and have resigned as the superintendent from Tasunke Witko Owayawa effective June 30, 2025. My career has included roles as a paraprofessional, teacher, principal, superintendent, program director, and consultant. During these years of service, I have always focused on ways to improve teaching and learning for indigneous students and it has proven to be a most rewarding and grateful career.

The best part of my years as an educator has always been the opportunity to work to make a difference in the lives of the children I served. My years at Crazy Horse School have simply added to that purpose and allowed me to meet and serve your extraordinary children. What an amazing group of talented, smart, and fun-loving students! Watching them learn and grow for the past three years is why I pursued a career in education in the first place. Secondly, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting the staff, parents and community members of Eagle Nest District. Many of you have moved from acquaintances to friends whom I will cherish in the years to come.

As a superintendent, my top priority is to ensure the decisions we make benefit the children we serve. We are a small school, but by working together, we've been able to do many exciting and innovative things in a short amount of time. To name a few, we have accomplished the following:

- Addressed and implemented new curriculum for Grades K-8
- Received \$500,000 grant from Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Nation for a state-of-the art playground
- Developed the Wolakota Friday concept to provide cultural learning activities presented by local elders and community members
- Opened the swimming pool for youth in 2023 and installed outdoor tables at the school's entrance
- Received an award from Trust for Public Lands for the Land of Healthy Trees Project to create a schoolyard project featuring an arboretum, tree nursery, medicine garden, teepee and outdoor classrooms that ensure Lakota ways are passed down to future generations (This project is set to continue throughout the 2025-26 school year)
- Provided Project-Based Summer School training for teachers that provided fun and hands-on learning activities for students
- Created Career and Technical Education Construction/Architecture and CNA classes
- Launched a short-term Credit Recovery program to meet the needs of students to assist them in gaining credits lost during the Covid-19 pandemic so they could graduate
- Received a 5-year Project AWARE Grant to address wellness issues of our students, staff, parents, and families, especially addressing suicide awareness
- Received a 5-year Native Youth Community Program Grant to encourage Native students to become teachers
- Received a 4-Year FACE grant to begin in 2025 to serve younger children and their parents
- Supported multiple incentives for students through Project AWARE and activity funds, including field trips, incentive store, movie nights, parent and student Bingo, cultural summer camps, etc.
- Provided summer instructional boot camp for teachers and paraprofessionals, paid stipends for attendance and provided college credits that staff can use toward required recertification
- Submitted 21<sup>st</sup> Century grants to the BIE and SDDOE (still waiting to see if either are funded)
- Successfully completed BIE Fiscal and Programmatic Review in 2024

I am truly grateful for having the opportunity to serve the children of Crazy Horse School. I want to thank the Leadership Team I have had the honor to work with these past three years—Bob Amiotte, James Bagwell, Amelia Black Bear, Deb Cross, Leslie Cuny, Jodi Stoddard, John May, James Pedler, Annie Janis, Ace Amiotte, Beef Randall, and Vikki Eagle Bear. Our collaborative efforts to create a safe environment where children can learn and grow have always been our unwavering priority.

I have especially appreciated the administrative office team for the past three years—Becky Young, Bre Lamont, Abdul Almayuuf, Lynette Kleppin, Agnes Randall, Leah Pucket, and Carrie Sitting Up---for their hard work and dedication to our school. Their work made my job much easier and fun!

Thank you to the past and current school board members—Valerie Adams, Sue Yellow Elk, Monica Rattling Hawk, Richie Meyers, Dawn Moves Camp, Francine Red Willow, Dutch Conroy, Avril Livermont, and Tonia Dull Knife who entrusted me with the leadership of our school and provided the support and guidance necessary to effectively serve our students.

It has been an honor to work with the entire staff of Crazy Horse School who strive every day to ensure quality learning and Lakota Lifeways experiences are offered and provided to our children. Thank you for your commitment, support, and the positive impact you make to your students and colleagues. You have stood beside me and helped me endure personal hardships and cheered us all during congratulatory occasions. For these instances, I will be forever grateful.

I have also appreciated the leadership of the OST Tribal Education Committee and the Tribal Education Agency Director, Ms. Dayna Brave Eagle. The guidance and support Dayna and this agency, under the leadership of Chairpersons Tyler Yellow Boy and Ryan Jumping Eagle, provide to all schools ensures that important resolutions addressing specific educational issues are shared and followed.

Finally, to the CHS parents and Eagle Nest community members, thank you for welcoming me to your school and community and allowing me to serve your children. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your support and dedication these past three years. The kindness you have shown me will always be remembered. The partnership between the school, parents and community members is paramount to the success of our children.

To everyone, please know I am taking precious memories with me as I start this next chapter of my life's journey. My retirement goals are to spend a lot more time with my grandchildren, do some traveling, and improve my golf game! As it has been since Day One---the coffee pot is still on so please drop by if you have the chance. I wish you all the best and hope our paths continue to cross in the future. Take care and have a great 2025-26 school year!