

PUSD

PAGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Monthly Newsletter August 2022

www.pageud.org



First day of school is Tuesday, August 9th.

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ON THE COVER

Lake View Primary teachers, Julia Redman, Mary McCleaf, Maddy Crane, and Physical Therapist, Allisa Jones, backpacking from Navajo Mountain to Rainbow Bridge earlier this year.

Vision

A community of learners who direct our collective actions and resources toward the unique learning needs of every child in order for all students to become college and career ready and successful in a global society.

Motto

Collectively Committed to Every Student, Every Day, Every Minute.



Mission

Our schools are passionate about the learning-for-all mission and understand that every student matters. We are responsible and accountable for the education of every student that walks through our doors every day.



June 15, 2022

Notes from Regular Board Meeting: June 14, 2022

Page Unified School Board members convened for its Regular Board Meeting June 14, 2022. Board President, Desiree Fowler, and Board Members Sandra Kidman, Charles Weiss and Mike Mangum were present. Superintendent Dr. Bryce Anderson was also present.

During the meeting, Board Member, Mike Mangum, recognized PUSD's Employees of the Month. The Certified Employee of the Month was Maureen Batorski. The Classified Employee of the Month was Kris Worley.

The Governing Board approved all items on the Consent Agenda (go to PUSD's Governing Board website to see all 31 items on the consent agenda).

The Governing Board also approved the following items:

- A. Salary Schedules for 2022-2023 SY
- B. Proposed Budget and Expenditures for the 2022-23 school year
- C. A 2% salary increase for administrators, directors and exempt staff not included in the classified or certified meet and confer increase for the 2022-23 school year
- D. MyWorld Interactive American and World History for Middle School for the 2022-2023 SY
- E. Request to Move Level 3 Para Professionals to Level 4 on the Classified Salary Schedule
- F. Adoption of enVision Math for Lake View Primary and Desert View Intermediate for the 2022-2023 SY
- G. Adoption of Mystery Science & Generation Genius for Lake View Primary and Desert View Intermediate for the 2022-2023 SY
- H. Adoption of MPS Social Studies for the 2022-2023 SY
- I. Governing Board Meeting Calendar for 2022-2023 SY

GOVERNING BOARD

Desiree Fowler
President

Sandra Kidman
Clerk

Dee McKerry
Member

Charles Weiss
Member

Mike Mangum
Member

Superintendent
Dr. Bryce C. Anderson

Page Unified School District
500 South Navajo Dr. Page, AZ 86040

Long-Time PUSD Sub Earns Teaching Degree

Though classes don't begin until August 9, Dionna Dempsey has been getting her classroom ready for her incoming students since second week of July.

Dempsey has prepared classrooms for the new year many times in the past, but this year, the experience felt different. This time the experience had a different energy. This time it felt more permanent and solid, a feeling similar to moving into your own house after being a guest in another person's house.

The reason for that increased feeling of ownership and permanence, is that Dempsey is beginning the new school year as a certified school teacher. Dempsey has worked for PUSD for nine years. Four years as a substitute teacher, three years as a registrar and a year as the Edgenuity teacher. Dempsey will finish her degree in Secondary English Education this October. With the completion of her degree so close, the Arizona Dept. of Education let her begin the school year as a full-fledged, certified teacher. Dempsey will be teaching English at Page High School this year.

"It feels great to be official," Dempsey said. "Even though before I was the teacher of record and had my own classroom, it's just different now."

Ten years ago, Dempsey was working as a broker and financial advisor in Scottsdale, when her husband, Tyler, who grew up in Page, felt a desire to return to Page to be closer to his parents and family. Dionna, who grew up in the valley, came along.

Upon moving to Page, Dempsey took a position with Aman-Giri as its financial analyst.

"I had no passion for it," she said. "I just messed with numbers all days. I didn't see any other people. It was pretty terrible."

It was during that time that Dempsey had a talk with Nancy Walker. "She said, 'You should think about teaching. Why don't you work as a sub for a few weeks and see if you like it.'"



Dempsey took Walker's advice and tried it. She started as a substitute teacher for eighth grade English at Page Middle School, and ended up teaching the rest of the school year.

"I just fell in love with it," she said. "Middle school is hard. Middle school kids are hard and they took me for a ride. But I still loved it."

Dempsey forged a strong bond with that group of eighth grade students.

For a lot of kids, the junior-high years are when they start having serious thoughts about their futures, and start giving serious consideration to what they will do beyond high school. For a number those students, Dempsey was the teacher they trusted most and found her a safe person to confide in.

"I encouraged them to try harder, and think big, whether it's go to college, trade schools or something else," Dempsey recalled. "I always told them be brave and try hard things."

Four years later, when those kids were seniors, she heard her own words of advice and encouragement echoed back at her.

"By then I was teaching at the high school and I'd run into them in the halls, and they'd say, 'You always encouraged

Students Find Their Forte in PUSD's Community Band



One of Page Unified School District's most widely-loved programs is its community band. The Community Band is funded by, and operated by the school district, and most of its members are students from the school district, but anyone from outside the district is also welcome to join if they'd like.

And many have. The Community Band is true to its name, with kids as young as five and parents of all ages shaking their tambourines, plucking guitar strings, banging drums and trumpeting the brass.

The Community Band held a concert in May and the performance given that night was a testament to the band's popularity, diversity and philosophy of inclusion. The concert included performances from the Page Youth Band, Page Community Cadet Band, the district's Filipino teachers, singers from the PHS Navajo Language/Unity Club, and students from Manson Mesa High School, Sage and Sand Virtual Academy.

The Community Band was started by Spencer Kimball, a music teacher at Manson Mesa High School, and Sage & Sand Virtual Academy. The idea for the Community Band grew from a discussion between Kimball and then-superintendent, Rob Varner in 2019. Supt. Varner placed Kimball in charge of the Cultural Arts Building (CAB) and tasked him with finding more ways to utilize the CAB, and encourage the outside community more involved with the school

district.

For Kimball – a life-long music lover and career music teacher – creating a band open to everyone seemed like a great fit for his talents.

Kimball has worked as a music educator for 35 years. He's been with Page Unified School District for seven years. He started as the music teacher at Desert View, a position he held for four years.

Kimball has always had a passion for music, but his passion for teaching music developed while doing his student teaching.

"I had a great student teaching experience," Kimball said. "I think it was really critical to the way I teach music now, and the way I approach music education."

Kimball did this student teaching under the tutelage of Robert Campbell at South Davis Junior High. "Throughout his career he was recognized as one of the best music teachers in the state," said Kimball.

The music program at South Davis Junior High was extremely popular, with as many as 50 students in each class.

"His classrooms were very disciplined and structured," Kimball remembers. "He used material-based learning methods. The students would progress to the level laid out

Art for the Sake of Art

Robin Bradley's summer class aims to create a new generation of artists.



Robin Bradley's philosophy for her summer art class is Art for the Sake of Art. She has created a space, an environment where her students' creativity can thrive, and where artistic experimentation is encouraged. Ms. Bradley teaches art at Page Middle School, and this summer, she's teaching an art class for PUSD's summer enrichment program.

"We spend the regular school year learning the art standards, the techniques and the different methods, said Ms. Bradley. "After my students learn them, we get to spend a little time using them to make art, but then we have to move on to the next set of standards. But my summer art class is different. My summer classes are about having fun creating art using the skills and techniques we learned during the year, and we create art just for the joy of creating art."

Student artist, Makayla Goatson, is loving the summer art class. "I love doing art," she said.

As much as Goatson loves creating art and attending art classes, she loves orchestra even more. So, during the regular school year she takes orchestra class rather than art, but wishes she has time to do both. She was very excited when she heard Page Middle School was offering an art class over the summer. Goatson loves all forms of art, but her favorite form is sketching.

"I'm always doing it" she said. "When I'm home and in my free time, but it's been fun being able to do it with other

people."

Another student, Truex Williams, who will be an eighth grader in the coming school year, has enjoyed having time to experiment with his art projects. One area Williams has enjoyed working on during the summer art class has been perfecting his shading skills. "I like exploring different colors and using different color combinations, and when I find one I like, I make it look really nice with shading," he said. "I like to make it shine!"

Finding the color combinations that work well together, and getting the shading just right, involves a lot of trial and error, he says. Sometimes he tosses an unsatisfactory work in the garbage, and starts again.

That's a good quality in an artist, says Ms. Bradley. "Each time he tries it – the shading – it gets more intricate and experimental."

Of course, students are free to create art on their terms any time they want in their own homes, but the school has something students may not have at home: large quantities of art resources and supplies. In Ms. Bradley's art classroom, students have free access to different types of art paper, paper creasers, wax melters, paint, brushes, stamps, presses, pencils. And the shelves of Ms. Bradley's classroom are stacked with old National Geographics, and photography

See ARTISTS pg. 15

Sand Devils Complete Successful Summer Football Camp



Coach Billie is happy.

"It's day two of camp, and I'm happier than I've ever been at football camp," he said.

There are several reasons why Sand Devils Head Football Coach, Leland "Bubba" Billie is happy, and feeling optimistic. One, Coach Billie eats, drinks and breathes football. He dreams in turf and pigskin. And at last, it's football season.

Two, he has a large group of dedicated boys, and a few girls, attending summer football camp this year. "We just didn't have a good turnout at camp last year," said Billie. "Not even enough to put together a proper offensive squad. But this year I have enough for three full offensive units and I'm working all of them."

Three: This is Coach Billie's fourth year as coach of the Sand Devils football team. This year's seniors were freshmen Coach Billie's first year as coach. "They know my style and the way I do things and they show that to the new kids, and that makes my job a lot easier," said Coach Billie.

The fourth reason Coach Billie is happy is that a number of this year's seniors were starters last year. Collin Joe, Connor Shirley, Austin Wilson, Jimmy Alvarez, and Emmanuel Manygoats. Coach Billie has already named Collin Joe as his starting quarterback and

Some of this year's new Sand Devils are juniors and se-

niors who haven't played football before, but last year they had some positive experiences in other areas of school that gave them the confidence to try some new things.

Coach Billie is happy with the effort he's getting from his players at camp this year. "We're starting with the basics, like we do the first week," said Coach Billie. "We're focusing on the fundamentals, fitness and team bonding. Get the players back in a football mindset, back to thinking and acting as a team. But, I'm also seeing a great deal of talent in about every position. In a lot of ways, we're ahead of where we usually are this time of year."

The Sand Devils move into newly-created region this year that will include Winslow, Blue Ridge, Show Low, Round Valley, Ganado, Monument Valley and Window Rock. The new region is called the 3A Northeast Region.

"It's going to be a lot tougher than the regular 3A north," said Coach Billie. "We're going to have to play very well to have a good season."

The Sand Devils first regular season game is August 26 against Red Mesa. It's a home game. They play a scrimmage game against Tuba City on Aug. 19.

Meet Bee Sanderson

PHS MARCHING BAND'S DRUM MAJOR

Page High School's marching band began practicing Monday, July 25th., meeting every morning on the high school practice field to work through maneuvers, and iron out their rhythm and routine.

The marching band is being led by Bee Sanderson, who is serving as drum major for the second year in a row. Bee is a senior this year. She was born and raised in Page. She's the daughter of Bryon and Cindy Sanderson.

Selecting Sanderson as the drum major was an easy choice, said Alex Moore, who teaches band at Page Middle School, and helps with the marching band.

"She has a high level of commitment to it," said Moore. "She's very dependable, and she stands out in a way we like to see in student leaders. She leads through a way that's different than drum majors I've seen before. She leads without having to yell, or become boisterous, and that's a great asset. That reduces a lot of tension among the other band members, and helps them stay focused."

Moore has taught Sanderson since eighth grade.

"To see how she's grown over the last five years is remarkable," said Moore. "She used to be very introverted and in her shell. I think marching band has allowed her to emerge as a leader."

This is Sanderson's seventh year in band, her third year in marching band. In regular band she plays the trumpet.

"I chose the trumpet because it's really flashy, and stands out," she said. "I always wanted to be the leader, and the trumpet seemed like the instrument a leader would play."

As the drum major, Sanderson is the on-field leader of the band. In a lot of ways, she has as much influence as the teachers. She gets a say in what happens. During a performance, she is the one who starts and stops the music.

"It's a little hard to get used to," she said. "All of a sudden you're first in command."

During the early days of practice and rehearsal, Sanderson stands a little away from the rest of the marching band and taps the gock block, a loud, hand-held percussion instrument.

"It's basically a big metronome that's loud enough for everyone on the field to hear," Sanderson explained.

Striking the gock block, Sanderson keeps the band in synch, moving together. The band listens to her while watch-

ing the teachers who give them hand and vocal directions. The two working together allows the marching band to more efficiently work out their choreography and field blocking.

After the band has learned the choreography, Sanderson will move to the head of the field and conduct the band using her hands during performances.

The ideal drum major's influence extends beyond the field, and that's

something Sanderson strives for in her role as drum major.

"In a lot of ways, I'm a second mother to the band members," she said. "They can come me for whatever problems they may have, whether its technical support, emotional support., school problems or grades, I'll always be there for them."

When Sanderson was in the marching band as one of its trumpet players, she looked up to Antonia Muskat who was the drum major.

"She was basically my role model," said Sanderson. "I hope I can be like that for the lower classmen. She was just so great. She knew what she was going to say ahead of time. She was very powerful with her words, and she had an au-



PUSD's Registration Events Are Fruitful



During the last two weeks, administrators and staff from Page Unified School District visited six locations on the Navajo Reservation as part of its Registration Blitz. Most of the registration events occurred at Navajo Chapter Houses, culminating with the main registration event at page High School.

"This is one of the most important things we do as a school district," said PUSD Superintendent Dr. Bryce Anderson. "Many of our students and their families live on the reservation and we have an obligation to meet them, and serve them, where they live."

For some parents of PUSD students, the Registration Blitzes that occur at the Chapter Houses are the most con-

venient way for them to talk to district representatives and ask questions, or express concerns.

During the registration blitzes, students and their parents had the opportunity to enroll their students in school. For those who were already enrolled, students could get their class schedules, sign up for fall sports. Parents could open a Parent Portal account, receive information about the Friday Food Program and meet with principals, teachers and club leaders.

PUSD's Student Support Services attended the registration events with backpacks filled with school supplies and gave them out to students or their parents.

The events were very well-attended by the community.

Navajo Cultural Orientation Day is Big Success



P age Unified School District held its annual Navajo Culture Orientation Day for new teachers on Monday. The purpose for the event, is to teach incoming teachers about the Navajo way of life, traditions and culture so they'll be bettered prepared to make connections with their Navajo students and colleagues. The event is also open to returning teachers and other staff. About 40 teachers, admins and staff attended.

PUSD's student population, grades K-12, ranges from 78 to 82 percent Navajo. Many of them still live on the reservation and practice the traditional ways. Three of its school board members and numerous teachers and staff are also Navajo.

"I believe our teachers need to understand where our students are coming from as far as their home life and way of living," said PUSD Board President, Des Fowler, who attended the Culture Orientation Day.

There are still many parts of the reservation that don't have electricity or running water, and sometimes that creates a misconception that those families live an impoverished life, said Fowler. But it's actually the opposite.

"To many Navajo families, it's still very important to have a connection to the old ways and to the land," said Fowler. "A lot of things about that life are hard. You have to haul water, chop wood, take care of your livestock but that's how we stay connected to our culture, our land and our indigenous knowledge, and our identity."

Fowler lives on the reservation near Coppermine. She just got running water three years ago. "It has certainly made

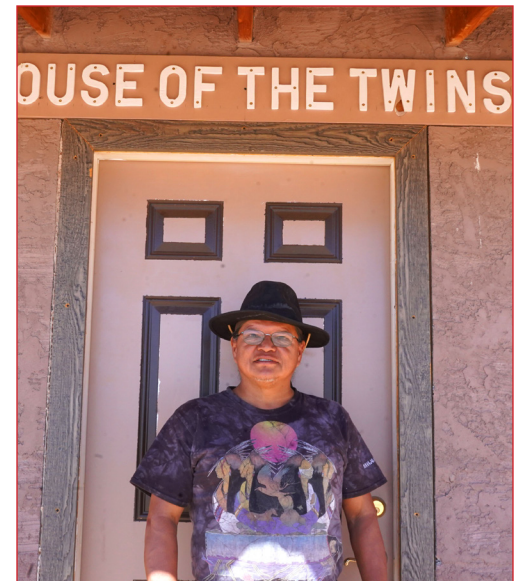
our lives easier, but I have noticed that before, when we had to haul water to our property, that we were a lot more conscientious of how we used every cup of water."

This year the event was held on the Navajo Reservation, on the property of the Patrick Scott Family, about 15 miles south of Kaibeto. The Scott Family have been living on that plot of land for many generations. The property is now used as a ceremonial grounds for Navajo families living in the Kaibeto and Bitter Springs area. The grounds contain a Hogan and a building for gathering. And lots of wide open range.

Mr. Scott spoke to those in attendance about the intimacy that can develop between the land and the humans who care for it.

"The connection between the humans and the land forms an ongoing circle and cycle," he said. "The land will grow everything we need. The food we eat, the herbs we need to stay healthy. Think about it. The sheep eat the herbs that grow here, and when we eat the sheep, those healthy herbs pass into us and keep us healthy through the winter. You can take the sheep fat and spread it on your wrists and elbows and the healing herbs that are in the sheep now absorb into you, it lubricates your joints.

"And think about how it works with corn, too," Scott said. "During the planting season we plant the corn, carry water to the corn and nurture it. Then we gather it and it nurtures us through the winter. It's an ongoing cycle that has occurred here generation after generation. We take care of the land, and the lands takes care of us. When you get really



close to the land, it will begin to show you things that will occur in the future. Sometimes they come in dreams, sometimes through intuition. It might sound strange to others, but when I have thoughts that come from the land, I have learned to listen to it.”

That deep, intimate connection with the land is why Navajo families wish to raise their kids in the traditional ways, said Scott. “The other way is easier, but the traditional way is deeper.”

This year’s Culture Orientation Day was organized by Carlos Begay, PUSD’s Director of Indian Education. The day included demonstrations on butchering, preparing and cooking a sheep, as well as other traditional Navajo food including fry bread, blue corn mush, and mutton stew, and the teachers were invited to help. At noon, the food was served for lunch, along with corn on the cob, melons and zucchini.

The day also included demonstrations on how to create traditional Navajo jewelry, baskets, blankets and other crafts. Two Page High School students, who grew up on the reservation without running water or electricity, talked about the challenges and the rewards that came from living in the traditional Navajo way. Carlos Begay presented a discussion about the history of the ancestral Navajo land, the history of Navajo Hogans, the value and care of livestock,





and other traditional indigenous teaching.

One of this year's new teachers who attended Culture Orientation Day was Revington Babu, a J1 teacher from India who will teach science at the middle school this year.

"It was fantastic," he said, about Culture Orientation Day. "It was great, and very beneficial, to learn about my students' background. Before teaching the student, you must know the student. And I have been really taken by the positivity of the Navajo students' lives and their life experiences."

"The life lessons the kids shared today, from growing up on the reservation, really impressed me. You can't teach those lessons in the classroom; they can only come from living that life."

At this year's Culture Orientation Day, the visitors were also given the option to camp on the Patrick Scott property overnight, and several employees took advantage of the offer. Those who did were treated to a presentation from Carlos Begay, who taught them traditional Navajo constellation names and stories, while sitting around a campfire of cedar logs, and the pitter-pat of rain on their roofs

that night.

Among the overnight campers was Barbara Shields, PUSD's Executive Assistant.

"I loved it," said Shields. "I loved that it was far away from society. And it was so quiet. I loved sitting around the campfire, looking at the stars and I loved watching the sun rise this morning."

Superintendent Bryce Anderson also spent the night and joined the orientation and lectures the next day.

"First of all, I wish to extend our gratitude to the Patrick Scott family for very generously opening their land to us, and being such gracious hosts," said Supt. Anderson.

"It was a wonderful event to allow our new and existing staff an opportunity to better understand a large segment of the community we serve. The staffs of our Indian Education Office, Student Support Services and Transportation Department put an extraordinary amount of planning and work into making it a great success. The ultimate recipient of the work that was accomplished will be our students and their families."

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Certified Employee of the Month
May 2022



Maureen Batorski

Classified Employee of the Month
May 2022



Kris Worley



Announcements

PAGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEET THE TEACHER OPEN HOUSES 6TH & 9TH GRADE ORIENTATIONS



ALL EVENTS on
AUGUST 8TH

Lake View Primary | Meet Your Teacher | 1-3:30PM

Desert View Intermediate | Meet Your Teacher | 1-3:45PM

Page Middle School | 6th Grade Orientation | 2-4PM

Page High School | Incoming Freshmen Orientation | 9AM-Noon

grand circle storytelling festival

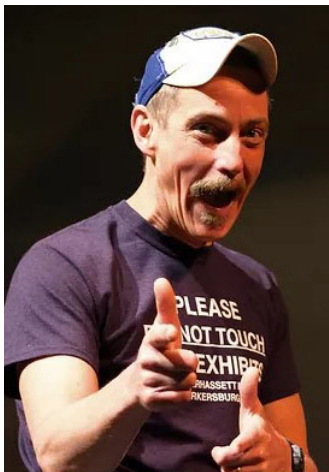
Mark your calendars

for the **Grand Circle Storytelling Festival's** inaugural event.

Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022 | 7 PM

Cultural Arts Building | Page, Arizona

FEATURING



Bil Lepp



**Rosemerry
Wahtola Trommer**



Laura Tohe
Navajo Poet Laureate



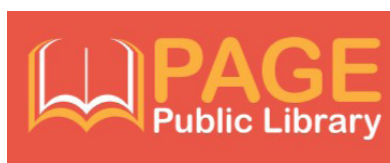
Steven Law

Spend an evening with four talented, award-winning storytellers who spin wisdom and humor into thought-provoking tales that will delight and inspire the whole family.

General Admission Adult: \$8

General Admission Child: \$3

PUSD Students, Teachers & Staff: \$5



ad•ven•ture part•ners
defining destinations



DEMPSEY from pg. 2

us to go to college; why don't you go to college? You always told us to try big things. You always told us that we can do it.'

"I felt like I was too old to go back to college, and besides, the thought of doing that was terrifying."

Not too long after that conversation, the high school held an event inviting college recruiters to visit the campus to talk with high school juniors and seniors.

"I wandered over to the Grand Canyon University booth and talked to them about what it would take to get my degree," Dempsey said. "I gave it some thought and decided to do it. I have to admit, a big part of why I went back to college was to prove to my students that if I could do it, they could do it too."

Dempsey started at GCU in the fall of 2018 and went full time, earning her degree in secondary education English.

And if Dempsey's students ask her if it was hard, she'll tell them, yes, it was pretty hard. It took a lot of dedication, devotion and expert time management. Dempsey attended classes online evenings and weekends, while still teaching full time for PUSD, and working as a volunteer at Page Animal Adoption Agency. As further testament to her dedication, she will graduate with a 3.92 GPA.

When Dempsey's students enter her classroom next week, she hopes they'll find it a warm, welcoming environment that inspires in them a love for learning.

On some walls, Dempsey has hung art that portray her personality, and her love for literature.

"This also lets them know I'm going to be sticking around for a while," she said.

Other walls and desks areas are reserved for the students, serving as generators for the students to express themselves. One wall is titled, "Free Writes." On it the students can hang a paragraph, a short story, a poem, or a thought that voices how they're feeling that day. Another wall is covered in empty picture frames.

"When they reach Mastery level of a subject, I will put their photos in the frames," Dempsey said. "The idea behind all of this is to encourage their creativity and make the classroom feel as comfortable as home."

Perhaps the most notable wall in Dempsey's new classroom is the one behind her desk. It contains a large collage of graduation announcement cards, given to her from students she has taught through the years. In the center of the collage of graduation cards is a sign with a quote from Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, that reads, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

For Dempsey's students it will serve as inspiration of what they are capable of accomplishing if they dare begin. For Dempsey, it's a reminder of how far she has come on her own journey, and an acknowledgement to her former students who encouraged her to go to college and get her degree.

"I hope my students will gain some inspiration from my own journey," Dempsey said. "I believe we all have the tools we need to succeed within us. It's finding those tools and learning to use them. Our journeys may be different, and some may experience more hardships than others, but we all have the strength within us to overcome any obstacles we face. It is never too late to reach for and achieve our dreams."

BEE from pg. 6

thority that came from experience. She had a very positive influence on the rest of us."

For Sanderson, marching band becomes like a second family.

"Even all the new freshmen we met just last Monday, we're already really close to them after a week together," Sanderson said. "We want to make sure nobody feels left out."

Once school begins, the marching band calendar gets very busy. They have a competition every other week from early September to late November.

"Traveling to the competitions is one the greatest high-

lights of Sanderson's school year.

"I'm looking forward to the competitions and getting to meet drum majors from all over Arizona," she said. "Competitions is one of the best places to make new friends. There are all of these like-minded people in the same place and we're all very eager to meet each other. Every year in marching band I've tried to meet as many new people as I can. I still talk to people I met my freshman year."

The theme for Arizona's marching band this year is Exploring the Wonders of the World. The Color Guard will dress up like explorers and Sanderson will dress up like a park ranger.

ARTISTS from pg. 4

magazines. Her kids can look at them for inspiration, or cut pictures out of them for collages their creating.

Learning the techniques and the standards for creating art is a very important aspect for budding artists, says Ms. Bradley, but equally important – probably more important to the development of a future artist – is having those free-create periods, because that’s when a young artist falls in love with art, and creating art.

“Yes, it’s important for students to learn the proper

techniques, but it’s just as important for them to learn to love art, and to experience that amazing feeling you only get when you’ve created something beautiful that brings them, or someone else, a lot of joy,” said Ms. Bradley. “It’s during times like these, when developing artists are allowed to create freely, to explore the powers of their creativity, when they become life-long artists. And that’s something I encourage year-round. In my classroom, I want to create more than art; I want to create artists.”



FOOTBALL from pg. 5





in the band books, which is a pretty rapid pace. By the time his kids finished ninth grade, they were really set them up nicely for high school. I have used his approach in many of the schools I've worked at, but they've all been schools with smaller class sizes.

As Kimball moved forward with the Community Band, he wanted it to be less formal, more inclusive. It would still be structured, it would still be taken seriously, but anyone interested in joining wouldn't need to tryout to be included in the band; they just had to have a personal commitment to attend practices and improve.

"I wanted to reach out to the larger community," Kimball said. "I found there are a lot of people out there who are taxpayers, who weren't directly involved with the school district. A lot of them liked the idea that they could come to the school and be involved."

But Kimball encountered a big hurdle soon after the Community Band held its first practice.

He arranged a practice space, got together some instruments and in February 2020, the Community Band got together and held its first practice. A month later, PUSD

closed its schools because of Covid. When school resumed after Spring Break, Kimball moved the band practices to Zoom.

"We were trying to figure it out as we went along," Kimball recalls. "Practicing music over Zoom is the hardest way to do it. It's so much different than doing it in person. It was a tough learning curve."

When practices moved to Zoom, the band had only been together for a month, and no one had yet devoted much to the group. Kimball expected the members to drop out and the newly-formed band to dissolve. But, much to Kimball's surprise, very few members left.

"I think they just really liked being part of something," Kimball said. "The first months the band was practicing together over Zoom became more about building relationships with the students, and that turned out to be very essential to the eventual success of the program, said Kimball.

One of those band members who didn't want to quit was Tyler Adams.

"My son absolutely loved it, and still loves it!" said his



mother, Michelle Adams.

Tyler joined the community band when it first formed, and stuck with it throughout the pandemic. His involvement with the band has been very beneficial to his well-being, said Michelle.

"It became even important during the pandemic," said Michelle. "Without it, I don't know what he would have done. Being able to attend band practice was a nice break during the week. Everybody was so bored and stressed out. It gave us a great outlet."

"My son is a little introverted, and he's not really into team sports, but this taught him to work as a team."

When the 2021-22 school year began, the Community Band was able to meet and practice in person. The band met once or twice a week outside of Manson Mesa High School after school. The band consisted mostly of students from Manson Mesa and Sage and Sand Virtual Academy, but also included some Page kids who are homeschooled. As the year progressed, Kimball had parents and young kids join the band.

When the band began meeting in person, Kimball add-

ed a Cadet Band to the program, comprised of Kindergarten and first grade kids. Students in the Cadet Band learn the fundamentals of movement and rhythm.

"Music is a developmental," Kimball said. "Our goal, at that age, is to get them to understand the beat, step on the beat, and some simple pitch exercises. That helps builds a solid music base they can grow on later."

One of Kimball's Cadet students is Emmett Stanfield, who just turned six.

"He has a lot of fun there," said Emmett's mom, Kendall Neissess. "He gets to make noise and move his body, which is fun for him. When they did their performance in May that was his first time being on a big stage and he really liked that."

"I don't think the kids that age understand that they're learning music. They think they're just playing a game but at the same time they're being exposed to music principles, and music structure. It helps them grasp notes and rhythm and other building blocks of music. One of the things I like best about it, is that he associates music with fun and think that's important."