

PUSD

PAGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Monthly Newsletter Sept. 2021



www.pageud.org

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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.

BOARD CORNER

My name is Desiree Fowler, I am of the Edgewater Clan, born for the Red House Clan, my maternal grandfather is the Mexican People Clan, my paternal grandfather's clan is Bitter Water Clan. That's how I introduce myself as Diné women.

As we get into the routine of a new school year we welcomed our educators and students back into the classrooms. It has been nice to see familiar faces on school sites, a sense of normalcy back in the classroom from virtual schooling.

Page USD has done a wonderful job welcoming NEW educators with a week of Teacher Induction Day, one of my favorite events is the Page USD Cultural Immersion Day. This year Herbert Bigman and his daughter, Kelly Stacy, both of Coppermine, opened their homestead to welcome new teachers and administrators. Staff members spent the entire day learning about Navajo culture, food, language, and lifestyle.

The current pandemic has changed the way we greet and express ourselves with our relatives such as handshaking and hugs. It's important in our culture to connect through our clans. The kinship of clans may change the role of relationship and responsibilities; I could carry the responsibility of being the older sister, mother, grandmother, or daughter to my clan relatives. Kinship builds character, respect, and harmony with our daily routine.

The last time the committee hosted was July 2019 in LeChee. The Cultural Immersion day included a tour of the Slotted Canyon and a presentation at Navajo Village. Page USD needs to build a connection with students, parents, and communities. When we strengthen the connection that is created we find a sense of welcoming and belonging when we can relate with students and families. Page USD needs to be culturally inclusive when 80 percent of enrolled students are Navajos. The board recently approved two Navajo language teachers for Desert View Intermediate School and Lake View Primary School. The Navajo Language program at Page High School has grown with the demand of students wanting Year Four to be taught is amazing.

Page USD serves five-chapter communities on the Navajo Nation reservation; Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, Kaibeto, LeChee, and Ts'ah Bii Kin (Inscription House). Bus routes to these communities have not gone unnoticed, the district covers 1800 square miles in Northern Arizona. Na-

vajo Nation is slowly uplifting its Covid restriction for neighboring schools to reopen schools. Last year, students outside of the Page USD boundaries enrolled to attend hybrid learning.

Each chapter including Page has a parent representative who meets once a month with the superintendent and the Navajo Language and Cultural Coordinator. The Indian Education Committee share important information and updates from their chapter meeting. Each representative play important role in their community to strengthen the partnership of Page USD and Chapter communities.

With the recent closure of the Navajo Generating Station, we have seen student enrollment decline. The Arizona School Board Association has seen an increase in Native American student enrollment in Maricopa County since 2019. Currently, Page USD has seen an increase in Navajo students enrolled within the past last year.

I recently visited several classrooms at Desert View and Page High School as part of my routine visit, students are adapting and adjusting well to their schedules. I appreciate the time that was given to introduce myself in Navajo and English, I shared my clans and board role. I had asked students to raise their hands if they were related to me by clan.

Thank you Page USD staff and relatives for your time and energy to make this school year possible.

Be safe, I wish you all a great school year.



Des Fowler
Board Secretary

PAGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Congratulations!

JEREMY POOLE & SARAPHINA ADSON



Jeremy Poole
SSVA Coordinator / MMHS Teacher



Saraphina Adson
HR Clerk

PUSD EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR!

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE ADDED TO THE SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER PLEASE CONTACT

STEVEN LAW
PR COORDINATOR
SLAW@PAGEUD.ORG

Desert View Teacher in the Running for Coconino County Teacher of the Year



Desert View music teacher, Josh Brink.

In early August, Desert View Intermediate music teacher, Josh Brink, was informed that he is one of three finalists being considered for the 2021 Coconino County Teacher of the Year.

Brink was nominated by Desert View Principal, Mary Stahl, at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Brink received the news on Tuesday, Aug. 10th, which was also the first day of the new school year. After the difficulties brought about from Covid-19 last year, Brink was celebrating having so many students back in his class when he heard the news.

"It's an honor, and I was kind of blown away," Brink said. "I was already a little emotional having my kids back and the news hit me pretty hard."

Part of the process includes submitting an essay and conducting an in-person interview with the panel of judges, which Brink did in early August.

Stahl has only good things to say about Brink, and the energy and enthusiasm he brings to his classroom and building.

"Mr. Brink is the epitome of innovation, creativity, and enthusiasm. His persona contributes to our positive school culture," said Mrs. Stahl. "And his enthusiasm for music is infectious."

Brink does a lot of extra, creative things in his class, at his school and on the district level that make him stand out. For instance, last March, which was National Music in Schools month, Brink got the Desert View teachers together and had them sing lines from the movie "Sing."

He then put all of those short videos together to create the full song. He sent that out to staff and who then shared



it with their students.

"The students were so proud of us for doing that," said Stahl.

Last school year brought with it numerous additional challenges as students and teachers moved to remote learning. At the beginning of the year when teachers, students and parents were learning how to use Chromebooks, Google Classrooms and other technologies, Brink was asked to serve as Desert View's Technology Coach.

And he did an amazing job, said Stahl. "He shared with us how to use Flipgrid, Screencastify, and other tools to enhance student engagement in a virtual setting. He has made the virtual teaching environment accessible to all of our teachers."

In the early days of the pandemic, when schools were still doing remote learning, creating music together as a class was difficult. Playing together while keeping proper time and rhythm simply wasn't possible to do via Google classroom.

But Brink still found ways to keep his students engaged and thinking about music. One of the assignments he gave his students during first semester was to record themselves telling him what music meant to them and their family. He did in conjunction with a unit on culture. He then uploaded the recordings to his Flipgrid account and shared them for his class to see.

"The responses were touching," said Stahl. "Some examples included a student singing a Navajo lullaby to his baby brother, a family singing together, and siblings playing a dancing video game that showed them all dancing and singing together."

Brink teaches all 510 Desert View students, who attend his class once every four days. This is Brink's eleventh year as an educator, and his third year at Desert View.

The Coconino County Teacher of the Year will be announced on Sept. 17, during a banquet in Flagstaff.

Incoming Teachers Learn About Navajo Culture



Elaine Fowler, mother of PUSD School Board Member, Des Fowler, watches over the blue corn mush, while PUSD School Board Member, Dee McKerry and Manson Mesa High School Principal, Dr. Trina Hubbell, make frybread.

As part of its new teacher induction and orientation, incoming teachers and administrators with the Page Unified School District spent a day on the Navajo Reservation where they learned about Navajo culture and traditions.

The event was organized by Lyonel Tso, who has worked as PUSD's Coordinator of Cultural Programs and Language since January. Tso spent several weeks securing a location, arranging transportation, and finding presenters and volunteers for the event. The event was held at Coppermine on the property of Herbert and Nancy Bigman.

The objective of the event was to have a day immersed in the Navajo culture and way of life to help the incoming teachers better relate to PUSD's native students and understand the life they have beyond the classroom, said Tso.

"The more our teachers and administrators can relate to what our students' lives are like, the better we will be able to serve our students," said Tso. "Everything from the bus ride to Coppermine, the dirt roads, butchering of sheep, cutting wood, being in a Hogan, getting dirty, being sweaty, having no running water or electricity, cooking over a fire, was all a planned part of the experience.



Kimberlee Williams, a Navajo Language teacher at Page High School, gave a demonstration and history of Navajo basketmaking.

"In addition to this, teachers had the opportunity to take pictures and notes about the environment and culture so they can bring those into their lessons. When teachers relate their content areas to what our Navajo students see and live every day, our students will become more engaged and learning outcomes will increase."

More than 70 percent of PUSD's student population is Dinè. In addition, three of its board members are Dinè, as well as a large portion of its teachers, administrators and staff.

With such a large population of Dinè, introducing incoming teachers and administrators to their culture is an important element of teacher development, said Lynne Hoffmann, PUSD's Director of Talent Management.

"It gives our teachers insight into how many of our students live," Hoffmann said. "How can you relate to your students if you don't know how they live?"

The morning included sheep butchering and preparation, blue corn mush and bread making, and demonstrations of traditional Navajo weaving and basket making. Charlene Hunt gave a very detailed and elaborate weaving demonstration, taking the teachers through the entire pro-



Charlene Hunt demonstrates traditional Navajo weaving.



After butchering a sheep, a group of PUSD teachers, students and staff clean sheep intestines.

cess. She began by chopping and crushing the yucca root, then mixed it in water to clean the wool. She then carded the wool, and spun it using a traditional Dinè spindle. She finished the weaving demonstration by adding three lines to a blanket she was weaving on a loom.

The mutton, the bread, the blue corn mush and watermelon were served during lunch.

In the afternoon, the teachers and administrators saw presentations on Dinè clans and kinship, and were given a tour of a Hogan, where, once inside Carlos Begay – who teaches Navajo language and Navajo government at Page High School – explained to them the constructions, history and symbolism of a Navajo Hogan.

For teachers and administrators, one of the most instructive presentations of the day came from group of Dinè high school students from the LeChee and Coppermine Chapters who told the teachers about daily life for Dinè students which included advice on best teaching and learning practices. The students laid out in straight-forward terms the additional challenges they and many of their fellow classmates endured during the 2020-21 school. The students told the teachers and administrators gathered, personal anecdotes from their year of remote learning from the Navajo reservation. One of the biggest challenges for some of the students was accessing reliable, consistent internet. Even when using internet hotspots, internet service was often spotty, which made remote learning spotty, and unreliable.

“Internet connection can be tricky out here,” said one of the students, “which makes attending remote classes tricky. If we ever have to do that again, that’s something we want our teachers to know.”



PUSD School Board Member, Desiree Fowler, pauses from cooking to take a selfie with a group of PUSD students from LeChee and Coppermine who volunteered to help during Navajo Cultural Day.



Carlos Begay, who teaches Navajo Language, and Navajo Government at Page High School, stokes a fire that warms water for Navajo tea and blue corn mush.

BUILDING EXCITEMENT

PUSD makes more than
\$4 million in improvements.

When PUSD students and teachers returned to school, they found numerous improvements had been made to the school buildings and grounds during the summer months. The improvements include such items as a new intercom system at the middle school, new fire alarms at Lake View, to reroofing the CAB and Desert View.

The projects – some of which have been completed, others are still on-going – come with a price tag just over \$4.5 million dollars. The school district's portion of the bill came to only \$40,000. The rest of the funds came from grants from the School Facilities Board (SFB) out of Phoenix.

"The improvements Cody Chischilly and his crew are implementing will make a big difference to our schools and our community," said PUSD Supt. Larry Wallen. "We also need to acknowledge that they've been the first line of defense at our school protecting our students from the spread of Covid-19"

Many of the projects – such as new HVAC systems or a newly weatherized building – aren't flashy; they're out of sight, and often go un-noticed in the background. But, such improvements make a big difference in future maintenance and cooling costs. More importantly, for the teachers and students who attend classes in those buildings, having rooms that are cooler in the hot months and warmer in the cool months provides a more comfortable climate making it more conducive to learning.

But some of the improvements will grab a lot of attention from the public when they're completed. One of the big upgrades will be a big overhaul of the high school's main gymnasium.

When Sand Devils basketball fans step into the gym in November they'll find brand new bleachers, and a newly refinished floor.



A crew of workers strip the gym floor in the Page High School gym last summer.



The maintenance crew installs a new HVAC unit on the roof of the high school in August.

Many of the improvements and additions are being done by Maintenance and Grounds Director, Cody Chischilly and it was Chischilly and Chris Swatski, the former Maintenance and Grounds Director for PUSD, who took the initiative to pursue the SFB grants.

"When NGS left a lot of money that used to come to the schools went away with it," said Chischilly. "That's when I started to apply for every grant I could."

Chischilly works with a SFB liaison in Phoenix who helps streamline the grant process, which helps, because the process comes with a lot of red tape and oversight.

"They have a whole bunch of hoops to jump through," said Chischilly. "There are a lot of guidelines and a lot of follow ups to make sure it gets used for what its earmarked for."

One of the more exciting projects in the pipeline is refurbishing the high school's pool building.

"Most of that building will have to be rebuilt," said Chischilly. "The way it was built in the first place was incorrect. They didn't include dehumidifiers, so when the water from the pool evaporated it just stayed in the building and caused a lot of rusting and warped boards."

Reconstruction of the pool building will be sub-con-



Contractors install new bleachers in the high school's main gym.

tracted out and will start with a bid process.

In obtaining the grants, Chischilly says he received a lot of help from Accounts Payable Janette Bunting; Purchasing Clerk Jan Wiese; and Business Manager Vindya Weerahandi.



PUSD's maintenance and grounds crew: Cody Chischilly, Marcus Daw, Georgie Mowbray, Kayden Begay, Seth Cattleman, Calvin Nelson, Irvin Burns, Austin Smithmays, Terence Winlock, Herb Billah, Levi Parkett and Allen Nockideneh. Not shown: Travis Crank, Jessie Willie, Marty Mountain.

Projects completed and their cost

- Desert View reroof: \$835,859.91
- CAB Reroof and Recoat. All three roofs: \$271,513.88
- Middle School, new intercom: \$19,578
- Desert View, new fire alarm: \$112,317
- Lake View, new fire alarm: \$132,907
- Middle School, reroof of three buildings: \$748,200
- High School, new HVAC unit for gym classroom: \$22,557
- Middle School, new HVAC unit for art room: \$25,560
- Desert View, new HVAC units for gym: \$47,736
- High School, new mechanical power supply: \$16,000

Projects pending and their cost

- High School new HVAC units for Pool building and Pool gym. \$1+ million
- High school Weatherization. Reroofs, sealing of exterior of buildings. \$1+ million
- High School, new Bleachers in both gyms: \$501,807
- Desert View, new gym floor.
- Lake View, weatherization, reroof and reseal of exterior of building.



Announcements

NOW HIRING BUS DRIVERS

Starting at \$16.47 up to \$18.24/hour
depending on experience.

Drivers will receive a hiring stipend
of \$1,250.00

Payable after 90 days employment.

Drivers eligible for ASRS retirement, and medical, dental
and vision benefits.

PUSD will happily help you get CDL certified.

For more information please call 928-608-4101



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED BEING A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER?

\$175/day with Arizona Teaching Certificate.

\$165/day with ADE Substitute Certificate.

\$120/day without Teaching Certificate.

\$180/day for Long Term Subs (more than 4.5 weeks).

\$185/day for subs transitioning to teaching

(subs with pending teaching certificates).

To apply, or to learn more, please call
928-608-4101.



COMMUNITY WELLNESS COMMITTEE

GLOW

RUN/WALK

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

REGISTRATION BEGINS- 7PM
RACE BEGINS- 8PM

FREE T-SHIRT AND GLOW STICKS WHEN YOU REGISTER!

FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED

Sponsored by: CWC
Page Banner Hospital
Canyonlands Healthcare
Encompass Health Center

DOGS ON LEASHES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

Page Sports Complex
477 Haul Rd.
Page, Arizona
86040

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!
DJ SERVENTI

DINE' from pg. 5

The day spent at the Navajo Cultural Day was a moving and eye-opening experience for Leigh and Pamela Guenther, a husband and wife team who were hired over the summer. Leigh will serve as Page High School's assistant principal, and Pam is Lake View Elementary school's new Media Specialist. For the Leigh and Pam, who moved to Page from Florida, it was their first time interacting with the Dine' people on a level as intimate as they did that day.

"To be invited onto ceremonial grounds with such a deep history was amazing to me," Leigh said. "It really made me walk away with a better perspective of the history that the Navajo people have in this country. My wife and I truly enjoyed getting to visit that land and hear the backstories of the property. The day served a true purpose by sharing some key points to the Navajo community. I am very much looking forward to getting to know as much as I can about the Navajo culture. I look forward to learning the finer points of this wonderful culture."

Another of PUSD's new teachers who attended Navajo Cultural Day was Celeste Claw. Claw teaches physical education at Page Middle School, and she'll coach the Lady Sand Devils basketball team.

Though Claw is a newly-hired teacher at PUSD's, she's familiar with Navajo culture and traditions. Claw is Dinè. She was born in Tuba City and raised in LeChee, and attended Page schools.

Claw says her motivation for returning home was to

be closer to family and be more involved with them and their lives, and to be back with the area's youth. Growing up, she participated in some traditional ceremonies, "but honestly, not as much as I should have," she said.

She said the Navajo Cultural Day reminder her how much she missed being involved in it, and sparked a renewed interest to get more involved in it as she settles into life in Page.

Claw says she wants to be a role model to the kids she teaches and coaches and will encourage the native students to take an interest in their heritage, their language and their traditions.

"You don't realize how good you got it until you move away from home," Claw said. "I've lived in many diverse areas that were full of culture, realizing how much I didn't value my mine growing up. Now as an adult, I regret not learning my native language or history but it's definitely never too late. The Native Culture Day was an eye opener for me to be better."

Tso, PUSD's Coordinator of Cultural Programs and Language, hopes to have more Native Cultural events throughout the school year.

"We hope to include more collaboration from the Chapters and families for these cultural days and events," he said. "Consistent exposure of Navajo language and culture to our teachers will produce a number positive outcomes for the district, communities and students."

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

