

PAGE UNIFIED PUSD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Monthly Newsletter February 2021

**PUSD RETURNS TO
HYBRID MODEL**

Details pg. 2

SAND DEVILS



www.pageud.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Board Corner	1
PUSD Returns to Hybrid Model Feb. 16th	2
Meet Lyonel Tso, Coordinator of Native Language & Cultural Programs	3
PHS Football Coaches Create Online Training Program	5
PUSD Recognizes its Amazing Counselors	6
Employees of the Month	7
Students of the Month	8
Announcements	9



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

In the past 12 months our schools, communities and families have faced several unprecedented challenges.

We've seen and experienced the global COVID-19 pandemic, we've witnessed a national movement toward racial equity and justice, we've seen wildfires and natural disasters occurring across our nation at a level never before seen, and social unrest, protest and rioting at our national capitol and several of our state capitols. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, impacted and interrupted our school system and classroom learning, compromised nutrition, created childcare problems and global economic hardship to families who lost their jobs.

Today we face growing number of schools all across the country having to make hard and difficult decisions to temporarily cancel their face-to-face classes to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. This virus has hit Arizona particularly hard. Page Unified School District is doing everything possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. Through collaboration with the Community Wellness Collaboration team which includes local medical experts; the District Response Team, which is headed by Mr. Peter Jones, PUSD's Medical Specialist. One of Mr. Jones' primary responsibilities is to analyze COVID numbers occurring in Page, in the County, the State and the Navajo Reservation on a daily basis. This is a valuable source of information here at the District that keeps the school leadership informed and updated on its plans for an eventual reopening of Page Unified School District.

I want to thank the Superintendent, teachers and all those others involved in the creation and implementation of the District's Plan. Teachers, we see the extra effort and time you have given to our students, we hear about your struggles, and we want you to know that we hear you and support you. We will come through.

As I sit and ponder the impact on our students, parents and school staff emotionally, psychologically and physically, we, as a community and school leaders must



Dee McKerry
Board Member

do whatever it takes to bring our students back to the classroom. I am thinking about students who don't have a safe environment at home, and where the classrooms have served as their sanctuary.

Despite the continued surge of the COVID-19 into the new year, I see a light at the end of the tunnel with at least two COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the United States. This creates hope that we can fight and slow down the virus.

I'd like to close with a quote from the Office of the Navajo Nation President/Vice-President: "The strength, resilience and perseverance of our ancestors is within all of our Navajo people to this day. We will get through this pandemic together and we will overcome."

PUSD SCHOOLS WILL RETURN TO HYBRID LEARNING FEBRUARY 16TH

The Page Unified School District announced Thursday that its schools will transition back to hybrid learning on Tuesday, February 16.

Under the hybrid model, students will have the option to attend class in person, or remain home and continue with remote learning.

“We exist to educate students and, while the remote environment has allowed learning to continue, we know that having our students in person is the best way to support learning and ensure that we meet our students’ needs,” PUSD Superintendent Larry Wallen wrote Wednesday in a statement to the community.

The decision to allow in-person learning came on the heels of two recent reports. One recent publication from the Arizona Dept. of Education emphasized the benefits of in-person learning. That report coincided with a report from the World Health Organization (WHO) published in January which showed that school-aged children, particularly students under ten years old, “are less contagious than older children and adults.” The report stated that fewer than five percent of children aged 0-9 years old became infected if exposed to Covid-19.

The WHO report added, “The emerging data indicates that in-person school attendance is not a risk factor for the youth testing positive for Covid-19.”

This was all good news to Supt. Wallen. “With the information now being provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services, we believe it is in the best interest of our students to get them back in school as soon as possible regardless of the metrics,” said Supt. Wallen.

Another big factor allowing the District to return to hybrid learning was having a large number of PUSD

teachers receive their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. On Jan. 20, around 100 PUSD teachers traveled to Tuba City where they were inoculated with the first round of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine. The teachers are scheduled to return to Tuba City Feb. 10 for their second vaccination.

Arranging vaccinations for PUSD’s teachers was largely due to the efforts of Peter Jones, PUSD’s Covid-19 Specialist, who reached out to health providers in northern Arizona in an effort to get PUSD teachers and staff vaccinated when the vaccine became available.

In January Tuba City Regional Healthcare reached out to Jones and invited PUSD to be part of its vaccination blitz for educators. In addition, several other staff members have now been able to reach out to Banner Hospital and Lake

Powell Medical Center and have either already received their first vaccine or are scheduled to receive it.

PUSD moved to hybrid learning for a brief period last fall, but retreated to remote learning on Nov. 16 after rising Covid-19 numbers pushed school opening metrics from green to red.

The schools and teachers will implement several steps in the coming weeks as they prepare to welcome students back into classrooms on Feb. 16. Schools will reopen their Onsite Support Services on Feb. 1. All staff will return to their buildings and classrooms the week of Feb. 8-12.

If PUSD experiences a school-related outbreak that can’t be controlled with public health mitigation strategies, it will transition back to a remote learning environment.



Indian Education Office has two new faces



Lyonel Tso

Sand Devil alum, Lyonel Tso, joined Page Unified School District as its Coordinator of Native Language and Cultural Programs. Tso began the new position in early January. He is joined in the Indian Education Office by Lorraine Allen, who has worked for the school district for nine years working for the ELL Dept. and transferred to her current position in January.

Tso, a full-blooded Navajo grew up in LeChee and attended school in Page. While attending high school he played baseball and football. He graduated from Page High School in 2001.

When Tso learned of the position, he jumped at the chance to be involved. "All the items listed in the mission statement are important to me," he said.

The mission of the Native Language and Cultural Program is to

- Provide language and cultural support to educators and administration.
- Provide language and cultural knowledge to families to encourage learning at home.
- Develop programs and events that help native students connect with their language and culture
- Providing assistance to our native students directly to help their success



Lorraine Allen

- Partnering with all PUSD stakeholders to ensure our native students are considered in every decision
- Help Coordinate federal funding to ensure PUSD's native students have proper support at our district.

Tso says he is looking forward to moving goals on paper into real-life actions. To achieve these goals Tso will find ways to support teachers and staff implement practices and curriculum in their classrooms that highlight native achievements and values, develop and strengthen relationships between the schools and the Navajo communities.

"Of course, the ultimate goal of the program, and my reason for accepting the position, is to help our native students thrive and have pride in their heritage and culture," said Tso, "and to find success in school and in their lives after school."

If the program is successful it will help students in several ways, said Tso. "The more our native students see their culture displayed with pride in every day settings,

————— Story continued next page

the more they'll feel comfortable and valued in the classroom. It will also improve their motivation and self-esteem."

Tso believes that a large portion of the program's objectives can be reached in relative little, easy-to-achieve ways, such as displaying native art, posters and other items on the walls of the classrooms and in the halls.

One area Tso wants to address is bringing attention to how native students learn. "Native people have our own way of learning, that's a part of our culture," said Tso. "Our parents show us the way to do things. It's a very verbal culture. Our stories are passed down orally, generation to generation, and in those stories there are lessons. Everything is done with a purpose. Whether we realize it or not, a lot of the practices and lessons are still passed down that way."

After high school, Tso was in the Marine Corps from 2004 to 2009 and after his time in the service, he used the GI Bill to get a teaching degree from ASU. After graduating, he taught at Central High School, then Alhambra High School, both located in Phoenix, followed by Salt River High School in Scottsdale. At Central High School he taught freshman general science. At Alhambra High School he taught environmental science, and earth and space science.

He was teaching at Salt River High School when the pandemic hit. Salt River moved to virtual model which allowed Tso to return to live in LeChee. In LeChee, he got involved with the chapter house. When he started he volunteered to haul water and wood to families, but due to his other skill sets, he was soon helping the chapter with financial, and community planning, and updating their technology.

Terry Maurer, PUSD's Human Resources Director, was

very happy to welcome Mr. Tso to the school district. "With more than 70 percent of our students who are native, this program is very important to the school district and we feel very fortunate to have hired Mr. Tso, who has really hit the ground running," said Dr. Maurer. "He brings a lot of passion, energy and knowledge to this position. He's going to help that program achieve a lot of great things."

Tso is joined in the Indian Education Office by Lorraine Allen. Allen and Tso work together closely, coordinating and carrying out projects and programs that will benefit PUSD's native students, native communities and stakeholders.

One of Allen's primary responsibilities will be building and fostering contacts between the chapter houses and the school district on behalf of its native students. She works primarily with the Kaibeto, Inscription House, LeChee, Coppermine and Bodaway/Gap chapter houses.

"Good communication between us and the chapter houses can help with some student needs, such as getting a laptop replaced or help with a hotspot, or assistance with food or other items," said Allen.

Allen will also serve as a liaison between Children Incorporated and PUSD parents and students.

Allen moved to Page in 2000, when her husband got a job at NGS.

Allen has worked for the District in the English Language Learners department and has worked part-time with Johnson O'Malley before, on occasions when they needed a Navajo interpreter. She speaks fluent Navajo.

"I like my new position," said Allen. "I like all the new people I'm meeting, being involved in the well-being of the Navajo communities and the future of our people."



Photo by Lyonel Tso

PHS Football Coaches Create Online Training Program to Support Student Athletes

From a kid's first pee-wee football practice until his last down as a senior in high school, certain principles of the game are continuously drilled into his head until it's simply a part of their character, a part of his code, a part of his ethos. Perhaps the two principles of the game coaches emphasize most are: play till the whistle blows, and leave it all on the field.

But this year there were no whistles; there was no field. And that was hard to take for a lot of Sand Devils football players.

"It was pretty heartbreaking," said Page High School head football coach Bubba Billie. "There were a lot of ups and downs associated with it. For a while we thought we might have a season, then maybe a modified season in the spring. But one day it was pretty clear we weren't going to have a season. It was hard watching the boys go through that."

It was particularly hard on the seniors who had put in the sweat equity, who had trained and sacrificed to earn a spot on the team and a chance to shine on the gridiron.

It was a strange time for Coach Billie too. "This was the first time in my adult life that I wasn't involved in coaching," he said.

Last fall, during a time when Coach Billie and his team still held out hope that there might be a season, Billie and his fellow coaches implemented an online training program to provide support for their student athletes, to keep them fit and focused.

During the first semester, workouts were shared with players through email, Facebook, and even the U.S. postal services for those students with less-than-reliable internet service. But the program lacked a true accountability piece, said Coach Billie.

But, in the opening weeks of the new school year, the teachers and students had gotten pretty good using Google classroom and they moved their online training programs onto that platform. The new system came with improved accountability and after that, Coach Billie saw more of his student athletes getting involved, completing their daily workouts, filling out their daily logs, and submitting their progress reports.



"And with Google classroom, we can include videos that demonstrate the specific training exercises, which helps a lot," said Coach Billie.

During the program's first two weeks, players got back into the swing of things with basic fitness and football drills. The next six weeks got more specific, with coaches creating drills for specific positions. For instance, line-

men are doing footwork drills, receivers doing receiving drills.

Coach Billie plans to continue the online training program into the coming months.

"But really, I'm hopeful that after Spring Break we get together again and do the work outs in person."

The program has a second purpose, just as important as fitness and skills training, and that is maintaining camaraderie, team unity and a readiness mindset. And Coach Billie believes maintaining that contact and team cohesiveness has helped his student-athletes feel less isolated, which can be a serious obstacle these days with everything happening remotely, and in bubbles.

"I have my players call me now," said Coach Billie. "We're getting back into the team mindset again. For me, it feels great to be back in contact with my players, and I think they probably feel the same way."

National School Counseling Week

February 1-5, 2021

The week of Feb. 1-5, 2021 is National School Counseling Week, which makes it the perfect time to say "Thank You" to our amazing, dedicated school counselors who do so much to make our schools and communities a better place.

To see a more detailed profile of our counselors see our website: pageud.org

THANK YOU School Counselors!



Jennifer Jones
Lead Counselor, PHS



Charlotte Nockideneh
Counselor, PHS



Jeff McIntyre
Counselor, PHS



Jeremiah Stewart
Counselor, PMS



Nikaysa Clark
Counselor, PMS



Lisa Redman
Counselor, DVI



Holly Castelan
Counselor, LVP

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Classified Employee of the Month - Sept. 2020

No Photo
Available

Gerry Kocjan

Certified Employee of the Month - Sept. 2020



Rosalina Aliboga

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Devin King
Lake View Primary



Nolan Jackson
Desert View Intermediate



Mayson Blanchette
Page Middle School



Shaunicey Begay
Page High School



Nizhoni Salt
Manson Mesa High School



Elise Donoho
Sage & Sand Virtual Academy



Announcements

PLEASE KEEP YOUR CAMERAS ON



Parents, while in our remote-learning environment, please encourage your student to keep their computer's camera on and have them sit in front of it while attending classes virtually.



THANK YOU!

STUDENTS WHO SIT IN FRONT OF THEIR CAMERAS ARE:

- More accountable for their actions and role as a student
- More engaged with their teachers and classmates
- More likely to pay attention to the lessons and curriculum
- Better prepared for test and quizzes



PUSD schools will return to hybrid learning Tuesday, February 16th.

Temperature checks, masking, social distancing and other safety precautions will occur.
Students will still have the option to remain home and attend class virtually.



More information can be found at pageud.org under the School Reopening Plan tab.



Announcements

Encompass Health Services

Behavioral Health Services:

Counseling, Case Management, Psychiatric, Vocational Rehab, Substance Abuse/ court ordered groups, and other groups and classes.

Medical Services:

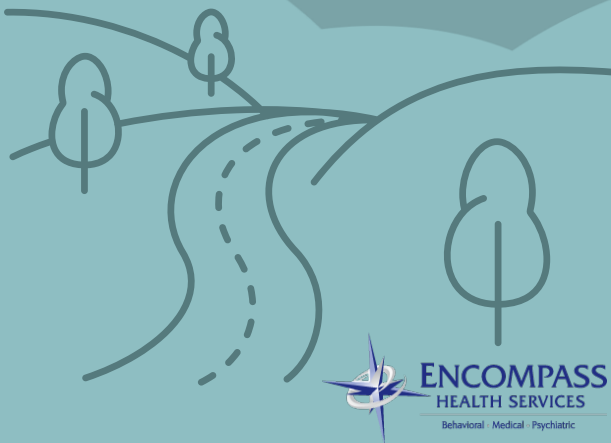
Primary Care with our Family Nurse Practitioner & Medical Assistant, and we now have a pharmacy for our enrolled clients/patients and employees.

Regular hours are M-F, 8am-5pm.
Please call 928-645-5113 to make a Behavioral or Medical appointment.

Crisis Line: 928-645-8180

Current Status:

Our doors are currently closed due to COVID-19, and behavioral appointments are conducted via phone or Zoom, with some case management and a few exceptions for counseling being in-person as approved. Medical appointments are conducted in-person.



Canyonlands Healthcare—Lake Powell Medical Center and Urgent Care

LPMC: 928-645-8123 LPMC Hours: Monday – Friday: 7:30 am – 6:00 pm

Urgent Care: 928-645-1700 Urgent Care Hours: Monday – Sunday: 7:00 am – 7:00 pm,
Saturday & Sunday – Closed for lunch: 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Services provided: medical, behavioral health—counseling, substance use/abuse recovery, dental, family planning, pharmacy, and free contactless medication delivery within city limits of Page.

Most insurances accepted as well as financial assistance available with our sliding fee program.

Website: canyonlandschc.org

Local information, including information on free COVID-19 testing days and times, are updated on our Canyonlands Healthcare Facebook page.

CWC Chairman and point of contact for Canyonlands Healthcare: Victoria Baldwin,
Director of Behavioral Health, v.baldwin@cchcaz.org

YEAR BOOK

All Yearbooks
for
Page High School
can be purchased
through the student
store for **\$65.**

