

Dear BPS School Board,

My name is Robert Petrone, and I am an associate professor of Education at the University of Missouri. Before moving to Missouri this past year, I was a professor at Montana State University in Bozeman for 8 years. As an education professor, I am interested in understanding how and why Buffalo Hide Academy is working as well as it is for its students. I am writing to ask permission to conduct research with teachers and students at Buffalo Hide Academy.

My connection with Buffalo Hide and Blackfeet Nation began through my relationship with Nicholas Rink, one of the teachers at Buffalo Hide. Nick was a former student of mine at Montana State. Over the past several years, I have visited Buffalo Hide on many occasions and gotten to know its teachers and students. As a public educator for over 20 years, I am in deep admiration for the work being done at the school, and I would like to now better understand the impact the school is having on the students.

Specifically, I am interested in visiting the school to observe class sessions and interview teachers and students. Interviews would be conducted at times convenient to the teachers and students so this research does not disrupt normal school practices. The purpose of the interviews is to understand students' perspectives on the school's cultural-historical trauma-informed program and their academic performance and social lives. My central research question is the following: How are the successful academic and social outcomes of the students at Buffalo Hide informed by the cultural-historical trauma-informed program at the school?

Dr. Christine Stanton from Montana State University and Melissa Horner, a graduate student at the University of Missouri, will also be a part of the research team. Both have established connections to Buffalo Hide Academy as well as the greater Blackfeet Nation community.

Importantly, this study is being guided by an Advisory Board consisting of several faculty and administrators at Buffalo Hide, including Matthew Johnson, Nicholas Rink, and Charlie Speicher, as well as several of the school's former students.

Our plan is to share our findings with the Browning school board and other schools in the district, at the Blackfeet Research Days, and through academic journals and conferences. Our hope is that members of the research will also be part of the presentations and publications.

This study is currently under review with the Blackfeet Nation IRB committee and upon approval will remain under the guidance of Dr. Brad Hall, Chairman of the Blackfeet Nation IRB and the other committee members. No research will begin until IRB approval is granted.

We have received a small grant to support this work from the Spencer Foundation, and we are actively seeking larger grants. Our hope is that such support would enable us to help the school build infrastructure to do what it is already doing well even better.

Sincerely,

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