

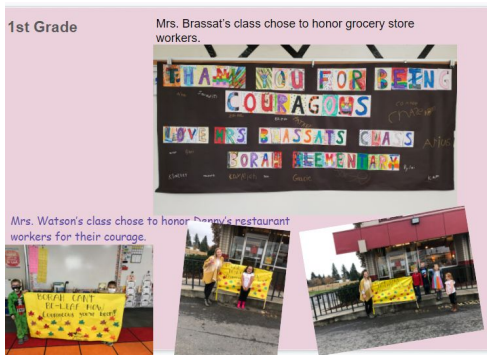
Elementary Update:

Dr. Cook and I held a listening session last week with the Borah staff. Teachers and staff members shared their thoughts about the challenges they face in their efforts to meet the social and emotional needs of some of their children. It is obvious to them that the pandemic has deepened and intensified the impact of trauma and stress on a number of students--particularly their youngest students.

We were also reminded of so much good happening at Borah this year. Among other new supports this year at Borah, the team is growing their skillset with the help of instructional coaching support from **Dr. Katy Karschney**, and the SEL coaching support from **Andi West**. The Borah Team will continue to problem solve ways to better address the needs of the kids while building strong learning communities, and we will be working with them to support their ideas. The Borah admin team, for example, will be adjusting some of their budget in order to add teaching support at kindergarten and second grade--the two grades where children are showing the greatest need of additional social and emotional guidance and learning.

We are hoping the Borah team will allow us to spotlight some of the amazing stories of learning and joy that are happening in their classrooms. As one small example, **Kristina Davenport** shared their school-wide Community Courage Project in which each class chose a different community group to honor for their courage during the pandemic. Students chose community groups and honored them by writing thank you cards,

hanging up hand-made posters in the community, writing letters, and hosting Zoom calls to interview community members. The following groups were thanked for their courage: Retail workers, Denny's employees, Kootenai Health nurses, grocery store employees, Borah staff, newspaper employees, military personnel, and CDA Firefighters. Check out [these images](#) of the project.



I continue to be reminded, from our experiences and discussions with staff members in a number of our elementary schools, that the pandemic most greatly affects children who come from families with less resources to address childcare, employment challenges, etc. Our

most vulnerable children clearly need our support, and our schools are making a difference, especially, as one Borah teacher explained, when kids can be at school to experience the close support and love of their friends, teachers, and school family.

Student Advisory Group (SAG):

Along with the feedback you get from trustee representation in the SAG meetings, **Kelly Niccolls** and I can periodically offer reflections from our SAG mentors about how those Student Advisory Groups are progressing. Our mentor teachers are very excited about the possibilities this year! Here's a snippet from **Charlene Babb**, the mentor for the elementary SAG team, after their first meeting:

What a fantastic meeting we had today! I was so inspired and impressed by the articulate, kind, and passionate students we have on this team!

I just loved how they all walked in with their notebooks, pencils, such confidence and so professionally dressed! Wow! I can't wait to meet with them in January! In the meantime, I will see about finding a way to set up a more consistent way for the group to communicate with each other and with me until we meet again [Schoology].

Our next meeting will be January 27th and will more than likely be on a Zoom meeting as it will be our quarterly meeting with the middle school and high school students. I'll keep you posted.