

Grade 8 Fall Leadership Outing (FLO)



Each year the Fall Leadership Outing (or FLO Trip) sets the tone for the year, allowing students to explore, lead and take care of themselves and each other. Students have the opportunity to take agency over their own experience, build connections with classmates and teachers, and uncover who they are as leaders. Emily and I felt that this group was awesome and worked really well together!

Day 1: Hike to Shy Lake Campground

We had a *really* physically challenging first day of the trip. Students hiked, with full backpacks, over 4.25 miles, mostly **uphill**. Students gained an estimated 1600 feet in elevation in the first 5 hours of the trip. When we finally arrived at camp, students pitched tents, collected and filtered water, made pasta AND had to prepare and execute a bear hang. Much of this was in the cold and dark! Students were such troopers and made the best of it.

Day 2: Hike to Lower Killen Creek Campground

On Wednesday morning we broke down our camp and hiked over 2 miles to our second campsite where we would stay for two nights. We arrived at the Killen Creek area where we had a sunny day to enjoy our surroundings. We discussed “leadership styles” with students and the notion that there are many ways to lead or to support others. It was a REALLY cold night, but beautiful and star-filled. Students had the option of filling a Nalgene bottle with boiling water to warm up their sleeping bags. This was a more comfortable spot and we were able to get all of our camp chores finished before dark.

Day 3: Stay at Lower Killen Creek - day adventure to hike up to “High Camp”

On Thursday morning our group delighted in some trail pancakes topped with chocolate chips, sprinkles, and yes, **SKITTLES!**

In the late morning we started our hiking ascent, and we asked students to spend some of their



hiking time thinking about their strengths and setting a goal for their 8th grade year. We also hiked part of the way up to “high camp”. Although we decided to turn back before reaching the highest point, we did hike quite far and students were challenged to push themselves (our maximum elevation reached was approximately 6400 feet!) In addition, we were mindful that the weather was going to change and we wanted to be able to have dinner and share strengths and goals before the rain hit. Students shared their goals and some of their peers added ideas of strengths or support for their goals.

Goals that students made for this year include:

- Being more involved in the Billings community;
- Being a strong leader in school and on trips;
- Greater participation in classes and improvement of academics;
- Making their voices heard;
- Running for ASB and making connections with other students;
- Having a memorable 8th grade project;
- Creating an awesome Graduation showcase!



We are grateful, encouraged and delighted to have taken students out into the woods for this fall leadership outing. The views and environment were *spectacular*. Being with your kids was the BEST! Thank you for sharing your wonderful kids and for the treats and dinner after our return.

See more photos at our [SmugMug gallery](#).
password: Billings!