

**West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
December 1, 2023**

Enrollment:

No Change:

Third Grade: 123

Fourth Grade – 104

Fifth Grade – 128

Total – 355

Student Leadership:

We continue to work deliberately to increase opportunities for student leadership and civic engagement in our school. For example, our Student Council will be giving back to our community on Thursday, December 7 by moving the Wamego Public Library children's collection to the new Children's Library. We have 20 students that will be involved in this opportunity, working to move materials and books between 9:00-11:00am and 1:00-3:00pm. We will be transporting students and supervising them during this activity.

In addition, all of our students were encouraged to invite a veteran to our annual Veterans Day reception on November 10. We had over 30 veterans attend, and students that invited these guests attended the event with their veterans. Food Service provided cookies and Paramour Coffee, and Renee Lucas of Oz's Tasty Treats provided a variety of muffins from her business. Student Council members decorated the library in a patriotic theme and wrote letters of appreciation for our veterans to display on tables for the veterans to read and enjoy while they visited and ate their treats. It was wonderful to see the respectful and joyful interactions between our students and veteran guests.

Kansas Schools Learn from Central and West Elementary Practices:

Administrators and teachers from the Silver Lake School District will be visiting Central and West Elementary on Tuesday, December 5, to learn more about our MTSS process and the work we have done to strengthen core instruction in reading and math, while creating a tiered system of support for students who need additional help or enrichment in the area reading.

On Friday, December 8, Mrs. Flinn, Mrs. Dow, and Mr. Meitler will be Zooming with the principal from Troy Elementary School to share their knowledge and experience with using Amplify's CKLA core literature curriculum resource and the process USD 320 went through to adopt the Science of Reading and implement the components in our district.

Building Leadership Team:

Our West Building Leadership Team is doing a great job of following the "Self-Correcting Feedback Loop", which allows free-flowing information and feedback from each group from PLC Teams to the BLT to the DLT and back the other direction. With this in mind, we have provided specific information to our DLT on various topics, such as ensuring our vision/mission for the district matches whatever direction the Strategic Plan that will soon be developed outlines, as well as ensuring that we are focusing on the initiatives we have already begun before starting another "new" initiative. For example, we are focusing intensely on implementing our reading/literacy curriculum and the Science of Reading with fidelity, as well as our new core math curriculum resource, Eureka Math Squared, and the essential mathematical practices that should be included in every math classroom. We also believe that there needs to be a solid, intentional focus on the retention and recruitment of high-quality teachers in our district. We are facing a time of critical concern with the teacher shortage and believe that USD 320 needs to make this a top priority.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 15, where we will focus on the following, applying some of the principles we are learning from our Adaptive Schools Training with Dr. Kelly Gillespie. Our agenda is as follows:

- Share Positive with Shoulder Partner (Inclusion Activity)
- BLT Agenda Format Changes from Adaptive Schools - Explain
- BSEL Work Check-in
- Improving BLT Meetings and Effectiveness - Activities
- DLT Follow-up
- Sum Up before You Stand Up – Identify commitments by each team member and next steps prior to our January 10 BLT meeting.
- Adjournment

West Elementary Items for the Good – December 1, 2023

- **CES/WES Site Council Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2023; Next Meeting February 27, 2024**
The CES/WES Joint Site Council met on Tuesday, November 28 at West Elementary. We presented information on our new core math curriculum resource K-5, Eureka Math Squared. The presentation is linked below. We shared the purpose and process of the new curriculum adoption phases, and representatives from each grade level spoke about the content, concepts, procedures, strategies, and models taught at each grade level, as well as shared some of the resources we use to instruct. It was a great meeting and we appreciate the following individuals for presenting: Amanda Jantz, Shae Biehler, Tristan Kirkland, Kandy Williams, Emily Ruby, Molly Townsend, Amy Flinn, and Teri Dow.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27 at 7:00pm in the West Library. We will be sharing more about our work with TASN and in the areas of Behavior and Social/Emotional Learning through the MTSS process.

- **West Elementary Veterans Day Reception – November 10, 2023**



West Elementary students and staff honored our local veterans with a special Veterans Day reception on Friday, November 10 in the West Elementary Library. This reception has become an annual event at West Elementary and we feel privileged to honor and celebrate our special guests.

The West Student Council decorated our library in a patriotic theme and also provided handwritten letters welcoming our veterans and showing them honor and respect for their service. We had over 30 veterans in attendance! Students that had a special veteran attend the event also joined their guests in the library for cookies, muffins, coffee, and milk for the children.

Thank you to our amazing Food Service Staff and Food Service Director, Laura Fails, for providing the delicious cookies, along with the other refreshments served. Thank you also to Renee Lucas for donating a variety of delicious muffins from her bakery, Oz Tasty Treats and to Jim and Laura Hovind for the wonderful Paramour Coffee!

We kicked off the event with students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. The students at West recite the Pledge daily in their classrooms. We do periodically recite the Pledge as a school with individuals leading us over the school intercom system.

Principal Amy Flinn welcomed the veterans to the reception and provided some information on how our school emphasizes the importance of patriotism, along with the work our staff does to recognize Celebrate Freedom Week and Constitution Day each year, which are held around September 17. She also shared how our school recognizes Patriot Day every year on or near the anniversary of 9.11. We believe it is important for our students to understand the significance of the tragic events from September 11, 2001, as well as the events leading up to and following this horrific day in our nation's history. She concluded by thanking the veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice.

To kick-off our reception, six Fifth Graders bravely sang our National Anthem over the intercom. We are so proud of Amelia Breault, Caden Herman, Emmett Hunninghake, Emmalyn Sampson, Harper Sibert, and Addie Gipson for taking on this challenge! Thank you to Music Teacher, Marcia Hermes, for supporting them and leading them.

Thank you to StuCo Sponsors Haylee Haynes, Sara Greene, and Stacey Hirt for assisting with the preparations for the day, as well as to all of our Student Council representatives.

Most importantly, thank you to all of our veterans who attended our event and to all of our veterans for your service and sacrifice. We honor you and respect you.





- Wamego Christmas Bureau Collections** - Just a reminder that we are collecting for the Wamego Christmas Bureau again this year, as we always do! We are collecting soup, mac-n-cheese, soap, and personal care items. Please send all donations to school with your child and have him/her take the items to the classroom. We will be tracking the donations for a prize for the class per grade level with the greatest amount of donations! We will be collecting donations from **November 27 - December 7**. The Christmas Bureau will be picking up items on **Friday, December 8**, so please do not send any items on this day! Thank you for giving back to those in need this holiday season.
- Girls on the Run** - GOTR has two more practices before they run their 5K in Manhattan on **Sunday, December 3!** Good luck to all of our runners on Sunday! Thank you, again, to all of our coaches, too - Robin Butler, Lindsey Lull, Erin Moody, and Brianna Rowe - for all of their work to prepare the girls this season!
- FastBridge Winter Benchmarking Assessments** - We will be giving our FastBridge Winter Benchmarking Assessments the week of **December 4-8**. Please make sure you encourage your child to do his/her best on these important tests. We will be testing in reading and math. Please also encourage good attendance for your children. We need them present every day in school to continue to learn and receive the instruction our staff works so hard to prepare!
- StuCo Assisting with Wamego Public Library Move** - Members of our Student Council will be assisting the Wamego Public Library on **Thursday, December 7** from 9:00-11:00am or 1:00-3:00pm to move the Children's Library collection to the new section of the library! StuCo Sponsors will be in charge of

creating the schedule and assigning students to this work. Students will be transported to the WPL and back. StuCo will also have their regular meetings at 7:15am in the lunchroom on **Thursday, December 7** and **Thursday, December 21**.

- ***Boys & Girls Club Winter Wonderland Event at West December 7*** - BGC is hosting a chili supper and hot chocolate bar on **Thursday, December 7** in the West Lunchroom from 6:30-8:00pm.
- ***Pottawatomie County Conservation Contest Entries Due December 13*** - As a reminder, all entries for the Pottawatomie County Conservation District contest are due in their office by **Friday, December 15**. If you turn them into our office by **Wednesday, December 13**, we will ensure they get to the Conservation District Office. Please see Mrs. Flinn's Principal's Blog for details on contest rules and entry forms.
- ***Dental Services at West December 14 and December 15*** - If you signed your child up for dental services at the beginning of the year, these will be performed at West on **Thursday, December 14** and **Friday, December 15**. Please make sure your child is present on these days if they are receiving services (unless, of course, they are ill). If you have questions about this, contact School Nurse, Sha Johnson at johnsons@usd320.com or call her at Central or West.
- ***Winter Theme Days*** - We will kick-off Winter Break the week prior with several different theme days at West. These days are as follows: **Monday, December 18** - Pajama Day; **Tuesday, December 19** - Who Hair Day/Crazy Hair Day; **Wednesday, December 20** - Hat Day/Reindeer Antlers/Santa Hats, etc.; **Thursday, December 21** - Ugly Christmas Sweater Day.
- ***Spelling Bee*** – Our West School Spelling Bee will be Tuesday, January 9 at 1:10pm in the West Gym. Each grade level will provide a preliminary spelling exam that will help us narrow down our top spellers. We will take no more than 30 total spellers. Our new Pottawatomie County Spelling Bee Coordinator is Laura Hovind. Laura's daughter, Gemma Hovind, WHS senior, who has won numerous local bees and county bees, will be presenting to our top spellers on Tuesday, December 12 at 1:15pm in the West Library. She will provide some guidance on "tips and tricks" to prepare for the School and County Spelling Bees. We are excited to provide this additional support to our top spellers! Thank you to our School Spelling Bee Coordinator, Hallie Hatfield, for organizing and preparing for our School Bee!
- ***Third Grade News***
Subtracting Measurements through Decomposing Strategy:
In Third Grade, students spend a great deal of time devoted to using place value to model the standard algorithm for addition and subtraction with numbers within 1,000. Students use vertical form in conjunction with a place value model to allow them to better recognize like units and the value of numbers when they are not on the place value chart. Representations move from concrete to pictorial to abstract and they serve to solidify the understanding of the composition and decomposition of units.



Thankful Trees:

Third Graders took the opportunity to describe things that they were thankful for in their life. They created "Thankful Tree" and shared their trees and information with their classmates and families. Students wrote something they were thankful for on each leaf and then adorned their tree trunk with fall-colored leaves. Once completed, students had a beautiful centerpiece to take home and share for the Thanksgiving season.





- **Fourth Grade News**

- **Pumpkin Math**

Fourth Graders practiced their math skills by measuring the height, circumference, weight, and volume of pumpkins on Halloween! We had lots of great discussion about standard and metric units and practiced estimating, as well. Students LOVED finishing the activity by cleaning out the guts of their pumpkins and counting their hundreds of pumpkin seeds. We thank local producer, Wayne Peters, for providing 25 pumpkins for our students to use for this activity!



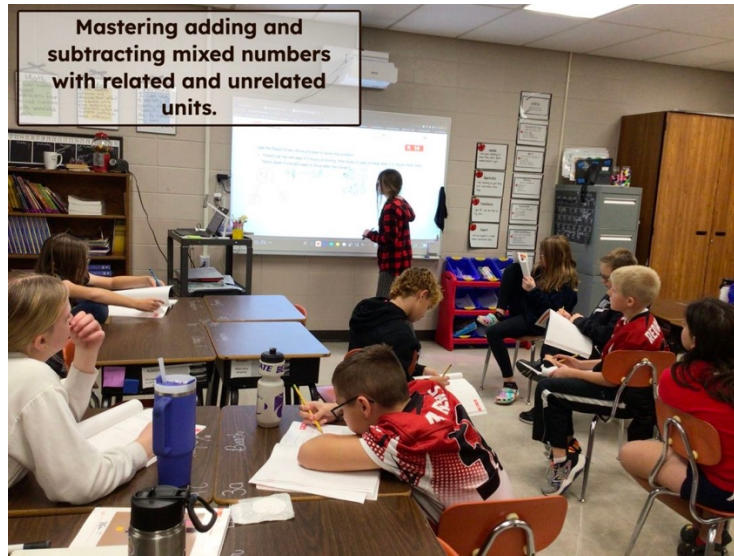
- **Thanksgiving Rotations**

On the Friday before Thanksgiving break, Fourth Graders participated in multiple activities to celebrate the holiday. Students rotated through classrooms to learn about the first Thanksgiving, wove placemats, crafted a replica of the Mayflower, and made and tasted "pumpkin pie in a cup"!

- **Fifth Grade News**

- **Fifth Grade Studies Fractions in Mathematics**

Fifth Grade mathematicians spent time adding and subtracting fractions with like and unlike units. The students modeled fractions with sticky notes, pictures, number lines, and tape diagrams as they connected these methods with the written method. Students learned how to rename fractions with like units (equivalent fractions) to help them add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers. The skills learned in this unit will help students as they move to multiplication and division of fractions.



Fifth Graders Study Space in Science

Fifth Grade students are currently learning about space. In one lesson, students worked to answer the question of "Who set the first clock?" to help achieve this goal, students learned about the history of time and how different civilizations first kept track of time. Shadow clocks were introduced, and students discussed earth's rotation and the daily shadow patterns that can help tell time. Students created their own shadow clocks and used flashlights to understand the movement of earth and how the sun appears to move across the sky. Several classes went outside on a sunny day and used the actual sun to check the accuracy of their shadow clocks.



- **Session 1 Fifth Grade STEM Club**

We have completed our first six-week session of STEM Club! Due to limited space, STEM Club was open only to Fifth Grade students this year. We had 20 students sign up for six weeks of “Flight School” where we studied and experimented with elements of flight. Students built paper airplanes and changed variables such as plane designs, paper weight, and adding and subtracting counterweights. They collected data and formed hypotheses about which planes would fly further and why. We also learned about how solar bags work - the air in the bag warms up from the sun which causes the bag to float.

We were so thankful to have the KU Aerospace Engineering program come to us for a day of flying drones! Dr. Ron Barrett brought around 25 aerospace engineering students to teach our STEM club members how to fly and maneuver drones. We had so much fun and learned a lot during our six weeks together. Keep an eye out for dates for our spring session!

Thank you to Olivia Garrett, West Special Education Teacher and STEM Club Sponsor, for providing these opportunities to our students!



- **News from West Specialized Staff for November 2023**

Art News:

Henri Matisse Inspired Cut Paper Collages

Fifth Graders at West have been learning that sometimes artists face adversity during their careers and it directly impacts their artwork. For Henri Matisse, he is an artist that enjoyed painting early in his career, but after a cancer diagnosis and treatment, he changed to creating art using cut paper shapes, as he could no longer handle standing for long periods of time to paint. By using information in a biography about Matisse, students had to determine which of the displayed art reproductions in the classroom were created by Matisse first. They had to use the clues featured in the biography with information to back up their group's responses as to which artwork came early on and later in his career. We are now working with cutting construction paper shapes to create a Matisse inspired cut paper collage.

Robert Indiana Inspired Kaleidoscope Lettering Name Designs

Fourth Graders at West have been working with using their names to create a piece of artwork. Robert Indiana is one artist who has used lettering as a feature in his artwork. The students are creating a kaleidoscope type of work that features their name shown in a variety of ways from backwards to upside down. It just goes to show that our first names are truly unique.

Vincent Van Gogh Inspired Sunflower Variety Still-Life

Third Graders at West have been learning about the wonderful varieties that exist when it comes to sunflowers. From the many styles and colors that are available, we are exploring more about sunflowers that will result in a watercolor painting featuring our findings. We will also see how many famous artists have used sunflowers in their artwork collections too!

Counselor News:

During the month of November, all students have begun Unit 2: Emotion Management during our Second Step lessons.

The Third Grade students have learned all about emotions, especially the different levels of anger. They have also identified when and where to take a break for calming down.

The Fourth Grade lessons have focused on rethinking as a strategy for emotion management. Rethinking is a strategy where students try to think of a situation in a new way. They can ask questions like:

- What happened? What are the facts?
- Has this ever happened before?
- What is something good that could come from this? Did I learn anything new?

Lessons for Fifth Grade were all about recurring situations that create strong emotions. Students learned strategies for dealing with these strong emotions and worked on making a plan for dealing with the recurring situation.

We will be finishing up Unit 2 before winter break.

Explore News:

During November Explore, the students continued working on completing all the missions for their grade level. The missions build on information and skills to help students explore the world of work.

Third Grade:

- Interests
- School Subjects
- Managing Big Emotions

Fourth Grade

- Skills
- Goal Setting
- Tools for Success

Fifth Grade

- Learning and Future Success
- Facing Big Challenges
- Learning Paths

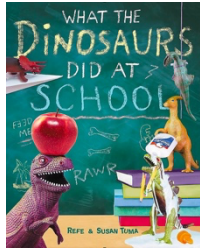
We also continued to discuss bacteria and students were given the opportunity to swab various surfaces throughout the building. We then displayed the petri dishes in the library windows so students could observe the growth of bacteria over time. We continued to discuss proper handwashing techniques and the importance of good hand hygiene. Students were able to view their class's petri dishes under the microscope to get a closer view. We discussed characteristics of fungi and bacteria and in groups they were able to discuss and identify certain characteristics.



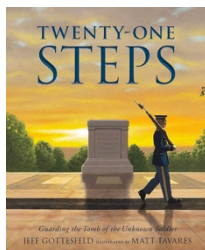
We also began discussing the School Spelling Bee. Each student brought their iPad to class and we helped them to log into the Word Club app. They use this app to practice grade level appropriate spelling words.

Library News:

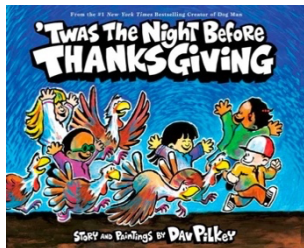
We have had the opportunity to enjoy lots of great reads together during the month of November!



We started the month with What The Dinosaurs Did at School by Refe and Susan Tuma. Throughout the month, we have had special visitors in the library for “Dinovember”, inspired by this hilarious book series.



The following week we read Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This book was a wonderful tribute to the nameless fallen soldiers and the sentinels who guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. This read aloud came just in time for our school’s Veterans Day Ceremony.



As many students have begun their poetry study in CKLA, we have also shared several fun Thanksgiving riddles and poems while also learning about how to use text clues to make inferences and find books using the online library catalog.

Music News:

Singing, Singing, Singing!

Both Fourth and Fifth Grade Classes have been working on learning their songs for their concerts coming up in January.

Fifth Grade - “Broadway Beat”

January 25, 2023

6:00 pm – Ms. Hirt, Mrs. Townsend and Mrs. Price’s Classes

7:00 pm – Mr. Eckart, Mrs. Rowe, and Mrs. Beason’s Classes

Fourth Grade - “Let’s Eat!”

January 29, 2023

6:00 pm - Mrs. McIntosh's, Mrs. Greene's, and Mrs. Ruby's Classes

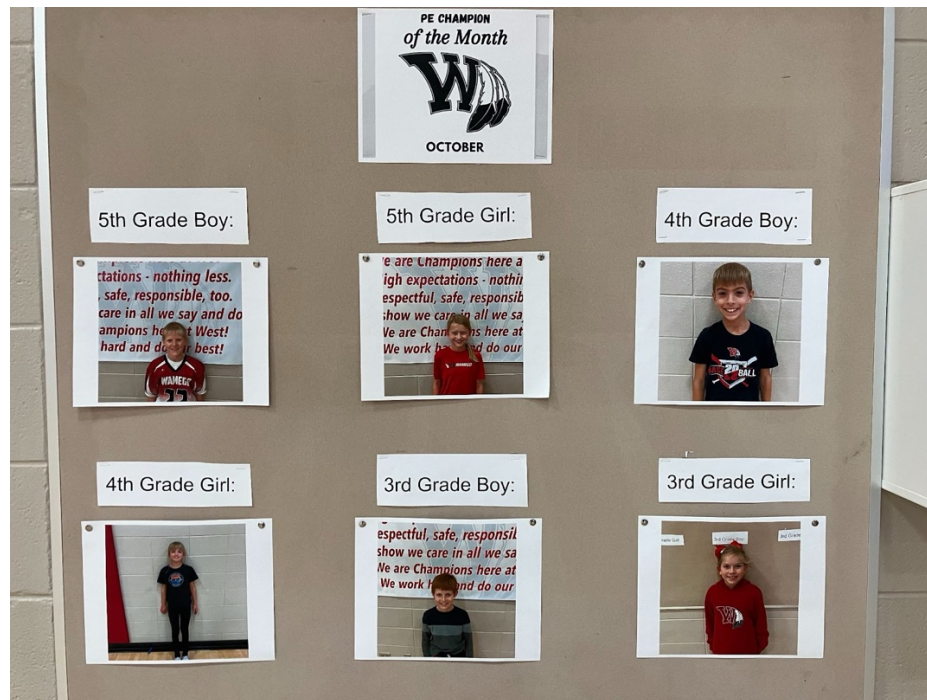
7:00 pm - Mrs. Kruse's and Mrs. Vanderpool's Classes

Third Grade has been comparing and contrasting holiday celebrations. They have learned songs, dances, and games from Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.

P.E. News:

During the month of November, we participated in both a basketball and bowling unit. Before Thanksgiving break, we spent a couple weeks practicing basketball fundamentals and playing modified basketball games. After break, we spent a couple weeks practicing bowling fundamentals and playing modified games.

Additionally, we started a new program called the "PE Champion of the Month". This is a new system we are using in the gym to highlight students who are demonstrating our School-wide Expectations of being "Respectful, Responsible, and Safe" and who are going above and beyond when it comes to participation, effort, attitude, kindness, and respect. We are selecting one boy and one girl in each grade level. For the month of October, the winners can be found below!



Technology News:

In Technology this month:

Third Grade students were introduced to Google Classroom and Google Docs. Students learned how to access Google Classroom from the technology web page. Students had more practice memorizing and typing their email and passwords. They were introduced to beginner level editing concepts, using the bold, underline, font, font size and bulleted list to alter a document. I created a "Thankful Sentences" document with questions students answered, this also helped to reinforce typing skills. They will continue to work on this throughout the month of November after Thanksgiving.

Fourth Grade technology classes are focused on building a model laptop to explain how information is translated, transmitted, and processed between hardware and software in order to accomplish tasks. We have introduced new terms such as RAM, CPU, ROM, USB, fan, and hard drive. Each student will complete a laptop build using paper copies to place internal components, keyboards, and apps into their correct location. They will be able to explain the purpose of each component and how they help process information.

Fifth Grade Technology classes have been introduced to Google Slides. Each student is working on an "all about me" presentation. They follow the instructions on each slide to answer questions, set goals, and research a specific question. They will be presenting their presentation to their peers. Through this activity, students have been learning how to add pictures, layer text, use word art, research a topic while in Google Slides, add comments, and much more. This activity helps students to learn how to create a slide presentation and how to turn in an assignment in Google Classroom. This will be helpful for them as they transition over to the middle school next year.

- **West Celebrates American Education Week November 13-17, 2023**

The West PTO and others once again knocked it out of the park for our staff during American Education Week November 13-17! The West PTO provided Dunkin' Donuts for all staff. Thank you to Reba Koster for organizing this! The Wamego United Methodist Church and the Wamego Community Market provided delicious coffee treats from "Grounded On the Go", a coffee truck based out of Rossville, KS to all staff, as well. Thank you to Amanda Bullock and Alex Rossow for organizing the coffee truck! On Thursday, our Office Staff popped popcorn for all staff to enjoy - thank you to Becca Boyd, Sarah Bloom, Courtney Gann, and Heather Stubbs for doing this - and on Friday, former West Teacher, Cathy Woodyard, brought in homemade goodies for everyone. All of these groups and individuals made our staff feel very appreciated and valued!

I am so grateful for the amazing staff we have at West, and the tremendous amount of support we receive from our PTO, community, and parents and guardians. We work in the best district in the state of Kansas!





- **West PTO "Decks the Halls" at West Elementary!**

Thank you to the West Elementary PTO for decorating our building for the holidays! Here are a few pictures. We appreciate all the volunteers that helped, and all of those who donated decorations! Thank you to Reba Koster for organizing this event!





- ***Frankfort High School Students Shadow Day - November 9***

We had five Frankfort High School students visiting West Elementary on **Thursday, November 9** all day to shadow several teachers in our building. These young people have expressed interest in going into the field of education and this is part of the career planning Frankfort High School is doing for their students. Thank you to the teachers hosted these future educators!