

West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
June 5, 2024

Final Enrollment for 2023-2024:

Third Grade: 121
Fourth Grade – 100
Fifth Grade – 126
Total – 347

West Building Leadership Team Updates

The West BLT has accomplished a lot this year. We have focused on data to drive instruction, best practices for learning, increasing student engagement, behavior and relationship building strategies, social/emotional learning, and building-wide expectations. I appreciate the work of this team and the effort that they make to create the best learning environment possible for our students. For details on our minutes from the last meeting of the year, access this link: [WES BLT Minutes May 8, 2024](#)

Data Day at West Elementary – May 22

On Wednesday, May 22, for our last professional development session of the year, the West Elementary Staff spent the majority of the day reviewing our end of year data, along with reviewing multiple important documents, and planning for the 2024-2025 school year.

Our agenda for the day included the following:

- Review Spring FastBridge Data
- Review 2024 Kansas Assessment Data
- Identify Celebrations for each team and areas for growth
- Set Building/Team goals for 2024-2025 to support District KESA Goals
- Review our Strategic Plan
- Review Building Legislative Needs Assessment/Add Input
- Schoolwide Expectations for 2024-2025
- PD Plan for 2024-2025
- iPads for 2024-2025
- WES Hub for Info for 2024-2025

To view more of the work that we completed, see the progress made by our students, and review our “next steps”, access this presentation: [West 23-24 Data Review](#)

BSEL Summer Work

Our BSEL Team will be gathering on June 10 to plan for August 2024 training of our staff. Our focus will be on the following items:

- School-wide Expectations - Be Clear/Consistent Building-wide
- Second Step Implementation - Review
- CHAMPS/STOIC – Review
 - Classroom Discipline Management Plans from CHAMPS - Complete
 - STOIC Checklist - Complete
- Opportunities to Respond - Strategies/Expectations
- Relationship Building Strategies - Focus Areas
- SEL Data - Attendance, Behavior (ODR and SAEBRS)
 - Attendance Goals
 - Office Discipline Referrals - What form? When?

- Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 Behavior Intervention Strategies
- Monthly “Keep the Quote” Themes/Activities
- Playground Rules/Grid for Supervision
- Student Recognition Assemblies
- eduClimber – Training of Staff and Use
- Para Expectations
- KESA Goals/Strategic Plan
 - Fully implement MTSS for Literacy, Math, Behavior
 - Improve post-secondary effectiveness - includes chronic absenteeism
- Review SIPs, 504s, IEP Snapshots
- Meet on Health Plans/Medical Needs with Nurse

Fourth Grade Wins Outstanding Trails Educator Award by OCTA

We just received word that the Fourth Grade Team at West Elementary has won the Outstanding Educator Award presented by the Oregon California Trails Association! We are so excited for them and proud of this amazing accomplishment!

This annual award by the Oregon California Trails Association recognizes excellence in teaching about the westward overland migration. The person/institution that receives this award should be one that **enthusiastically shares the “love of trail history” with others**, teaches **accurate information**, has utilized a **unique or imaginative approach “above and beyond”** the normal teaching of this information, and is truly a **professional educator** or **provides an outstanding program that deserves national recognition for their efforts**.

Nominations for the Outstanding Educator Award are open to any individual and/or group of educators or institution/museum that **contributes significantly to students’ education about the 19th century westward overland migrations in the United States**. The work may reflect a whole unit or special project within a unit or a course on westward migration. It will be considered for its **unique or imaginative approach “above and beyond”** the normal teaching of the topic, its **appropriateness** for the students’ levels and range of abilities, the **accuracy of its historical presentation**, the range of **student participation**, and its **effectiveness** in presenting the topic to the students.

The Fourth Grade Team has worked collaboratively to develop a 6-week unit in social studies that focuses on the trails and various experiences of our ancestors. Rather than relying on a textbook resource, they have created engaging, interactive, hands-on learning activities that encompass the Kansas Standards for Fourth Grade and that support a deep conceptual understanding of social studies content. Their deliberate focus on the history of the trails has allowed students to make connections to the past and keep history alive and at the forefront of the minds of our younger generations.

Our Unit Includes: field trip to Alcove Spring, Pony Express relay race, covered wagon cookie snack, traveling trunk activities from the KS Historical Society (uses of the buffalo and pioneer games), mules vs. oxen research for KS Socials Studies State Assessment. We study the Oregon-California Trail, Santa Fe Trail, and Pony Express.

The Fourth Grade Team will be traveling to Oregon for the annual Educator Trails Conference and Awards Banquet to be recognized for this award. We are using remaining Classroom to Career funds to cover expenses. We are so excited for them and for the opportunity they will have to receive this award in person.

Sara Greene Selected for 2024 Civics for All of US Teacher Institute in Washington D.C.

Fourth Grade Teacher, Sara Greene, has been selected to attend the 2024 Civics for All of US Teacher Institute in Washington D.C. for one week in July. Mrs. Greene applied for this opportunity in March and was notified at the end of May that she had been selected.

Each week, 50 educators will learn how to use National Archives holdings to teach the civic knowledge and skills students need for civic engagement in the 21st century. Participants will explore primary sources that shed light on the successes, failures, debates, and challenges in the history of our democracy. The program will also feature resources for sharing diverse perspectives and historically underrepresented voices in classroom civics lessons. This professional development experience will also highlight student voices in the Archives that demonstrate how civic participation can happen at any age.

Throughout the week, teachers will:

- Learn strategies for teaching with primary sources and making civics connections across the curriculum in hands-on sessions developed by National Archives educators across the country, including the Presidential Libraries and Center for Legislative Archives.
- Build confidence in using and accessing education resources from the National Archives, including DocsTeach and Civics for All of US.
- Experience special tours and activities within the exhibits of the National Archives Museum.
- Take part in collaborative group work and discussion with educators from across the country.
- Explore how landmarks and institutions in the nation's capital can enhance students' civic learning through site visits.
- Create a plan for how you will share National Archives resources with your students and colleagues and connect with the National Archives in the 2024–2025 school year.

West Elementary Items for the Good – June 5, 2024

- **MTSS Team Professional Development Update**

The West Elementary staff did a deep dive into our data on Wednesday, May 22. Reviewing all FastBridge data and Kansas assessment data in table groups, staff wrote their observations on post-it notes using the following guiding questions:

Self-Reflection Questions:

- What data catches your eye as you look at building level status?
- Are there grade levels that have made great gains?
- Any that have dropped or appear stagnant?
- What may be some of the underlying causes?
- What kinds of changes will we need to make?
- Celebrations?
- Concerns?

These observations were then moved into the following categories:

Categories:

- Third Grade Data FB Observations
- Fourth Grade Data FB Observations
- Fifth Grade Data FB Observations
- General/Building-Wide Data Observation
- Longitudinal Observations
- KS Assessment Reading Data

- KS Assessment Math Data

The staff completed a gallery walk with these seven categories. The staff gathered at the end to share one takeaway per person, as well as create a list of “next steps” for our building as we look to the 2024-2025 school year.

- **Third Grade News:**

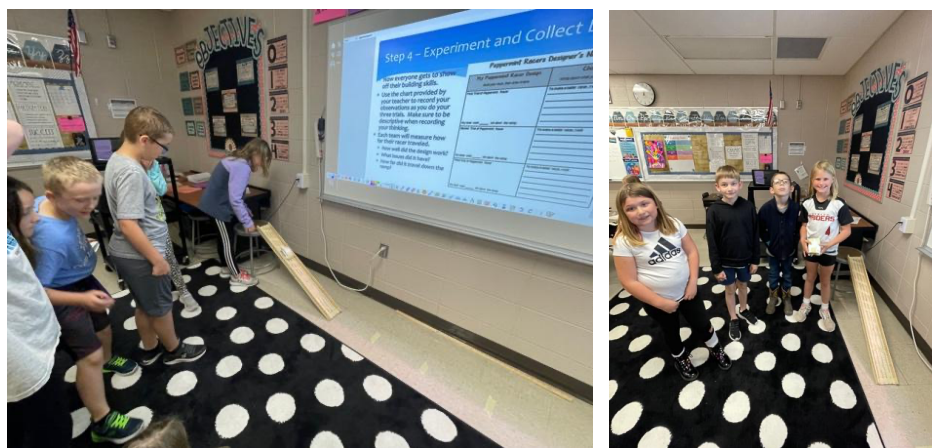
- **Third Graders Explore STEM with Peppermint Racers:**

Third Grade students were challenged with building a “peppermint racer” that could travel the farthest distance down a ramp. Students could only use the materials provided to them, which included Lifesavers, craft sticks, coffee straws, drinking straws, scissors, tape, and index cards!

Students were introduced to the process of scientific inquiry and investigation through this STEM building activity. Students were first introduced to the purpose or question of their challenge. Then, students did background research related to simple machines and how they could use the concepts of force and motion to help them build their peppermint racer. After that, students constructed a hypothesis and then experimented and collected their data.

Students worked to design their racer and then analyzed each trial test to see what they could change to make a better racer. Students also incorporate mathematics as they measured in centimeters the distance their racers traveled down the ramp during each trial. To end their peppermint racer challenge, students analyzed and were able to see which racer traveled the farthest down the ramp and why.

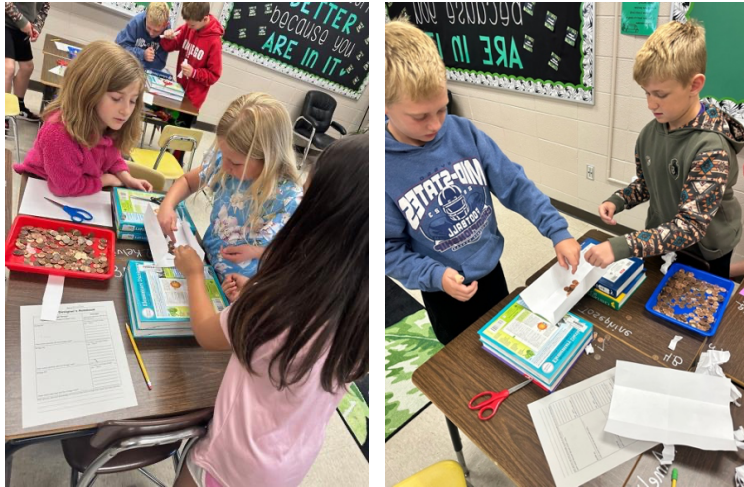
Students also had conversations about what they could do to improve the design of their racer. Students enjoyed this hands-on learning activity and the challenge to build their own racer! Students learned that there were many ways to complete the challenge and that it was important to listen to their team members and to think flexibly in order to have success.



- **Third Graders Explore Engineering with Simulated Bridge Building:**

Third Grade students have been learning about forces in science. After watching a series of videos on different designs of bridges and how they are engineered for strength, students were challenged to design and build their own bridges. However, there was a catch! They could only use two pieces of copy paper and scissors. They tested their bridges' strength by seeing how many pennies their bridges would hold. Engineering teams had three trials to reflect and modify their designs. This engineering project focused on students investigating and providing evidence on the effects of balanced and

unbalanced forces on the motion of an object.



Third Grade Enjoys Field Trip to State Capitol Building:

The Third Grade classes enjoyed their field trip to the Kansas State Capitol this spring. We had many parent/guardian volunteers join us for this special event. Students enjoyed learning more about our Kansas history and climbing to the top of the dome!



- **Fourth Grade News:**

Kansas Corn Commission Presentation:

Bill Johnston is a retired agricultural education teacher, farmer, and crop adjuster. His 33 years of expertise in both education and farming make him the perfect speaker to go along with our Ag Day activities. Mr. Johnston presented to our Fourth Graders this spring and provided a great hands-on learning experience for each of them.



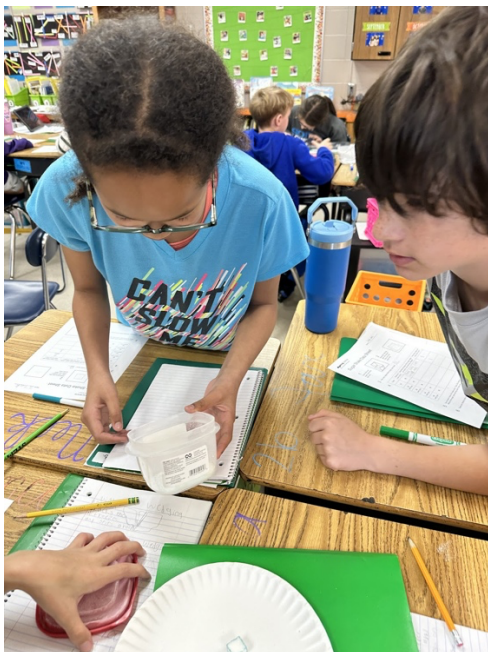
Fourth Grade Field Trip to KSU:

Fourth Grade classes had a wonderful field trip to the KSU campus. Students met with Dr. Frank Tracz and toured the beautiful Tracz Family Band Hall. They enjoyed a scavenger hunt on the KSU campus grounds and completed an art activity at the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art. Lunch was enjoyed on the lawn in front of Anderson Hall and the trip highlight was Call Hall ice cream. Due to scheduling conflicts, three Fourth Grade classes were able to tour the volleyball and football athletic facilities and the other two classes spent the afternoon hiking the Konza Prairie.



Fourth Grade Erosion Unit in Science:

In our Fourth Grade science unit on erosion, students explored how solid rock breaks apart into smaller pieces through a process called weathering (including root-wedging and ice-wedging). In the activity, “Sugar Shake”, students used sugar cubes as a model for rocks. They performed experiments with this model to understand the process of weathering and how this process explains why rocks at the tops of mountains are jagged, while those at the bottom are rounded. A fun time was had by all!



- **Fifth Grade News:**

- **Fifth Graders Learn through STARBASE:**

Fifth Grade classes attended five sessions at Starbase in Manhattan this spring. They worked with many STEAM activities - including CAD programming, robotics, rocketry, chemistry, physics, and more! Students also took a trip to Fort Riley to learn about the Apache helicopters. This is an excellent opportunity for students to apply what they have learned in math and science over the course of Fifth Grade and learn about careers in the areas of engineering, IT, and design.



- **Fifth Graders Design “Taco Trucks” in Mathematics Class:**

Fifth Graders made taco trucks and menus during math. The students applied their learning to create a menu and a model version of a taco truck. They applied their knowledge of decimals, money, area, and perimeter in this real-world project.



- **Fifth Grade STEM Club Session II:**

This spring during Stem Club, we had 13 Fifth Graders join Ms. Garrett after school on Mondays to explore elements of flight. The club began by diving into the scientific process through the creation and testing of paper airplanes to collect data on their flight capabilities. The following week, the students

engaged in modifying different aspects of their planes such as paper weight, folding techniques, and counterweights, to enhance flight distance.

The students also had the opportunity to experiment with solar bags, gaining insights into the concept of utilizing solar energy for flight. A special highlight of the session was a visit from Ron Barrett, an Aerospace Engineering Professor from KU, who introduced the students to drone technology and provided hands-on flying experience.

To culminate the session on a high note, the STEM Club welcomed Lydia Moreno and Bob Taylor with their Maker Van from the Kansas State School for the Blind. The students took part in various stations, where they explored building with Cubelets, utilizing 3D pens, observing a 3D printer in operation, coding and flying drones, and learning about circuitry.

We had a great time experiencing new things, asking questions, and working together!



Fifth Grade End of Year Celebration Success:

We had a wonderful day celebrating our Fifth Graders and their last day of elementary school on Tuesday, May 21! Thank you to Gera Steele for coordinating the afternoon activities and to all of the parent volunteers that stepped up to help!

The students started the day with bowling at Little Apple Lanes, followed by a pizza lunch at Wamego City Park. The students enjoyed all kinds of games and activities, like pickleball, Blitz ball, football, splash pad, art station, four square, and dancing with a DJ from Complete Weddings and Events. Snacks were provided, thanks to the generous donations of our parents.

It was such a great day, and we built memories that will last a lifetime. We wish our Fifth Graders all the best as they move on to middle school next year. We will miss you and we love you!





- **News from West Specialized Staff for May 2024:**

Art News:

The students wrapped up the school year by taking home items that they had worked on during Art class.

Third Grade recently worked on comparing Michael Albert's Cerealism mosaic work with Andy Warhol's Pop Art style from the 1960's. The students were surprised how the artists focused on different food-based items in their artwork.

Fourth Grade finished working on still-life drawings by focusing on items of interest to them from a variety of items that were available ranging from fast food restaurant toys to die-cast cars. The students enjoyed having a variety of items to draw and being able to put an assortment of items into a common drawing that they would typically not see together.

Fifth Grade wrapped up their art time in May by creating a translation tessellation shape. From there, they tested out their shape to make sure that it tessellated. That basically means that they made sure the shape would connect repeatedly on all sides with itself. Once that was achieved, the students worked on transforming their basic tessellation shape into something recognizable.

Counselor News:

We have finished the year strong! The students were able to complete their career projects and got them posted to Xello. This is a program that they will have continued access to and will use throughout their educational journey in USD 320 and elsewhere. They also finished any missions that were not yet completed.

It was a very enjoyable school year. Have a fun and safe summer! For those families who are moving away from Wamego, best of luck on your new journey. To this year's Fifth Grade class, good luck at WMS and I will miss you. The rest of you, I look forward to seeing you all again in August.

Library and Explore News:

It has been a fantastic year at the West Elementary Library! This year we have circulated 25,223 books and encouraged a love of reading that we hope students will take with them throughout the summer months. During Explore class, Ms. Cora, from the Wamego Public Library, recently visited to share information about the Summer Reading Program.

ADVENTURE BEGINS AT YOUR LIBRARY™

SPECIAL ADVENTURES:

POOL PARTY Wednesday, June 5th Wamego City Pool 11:00 am	CITY PARK SATURDAY: THE GREAT BOOK CHASE Saturday, June 8th Wamego City Park 10:00 am	PASSPORT PARTY Wednesday, July 17th Wamego Public Library 1:30 pm	CITY PARK SATURDAY: THE GOLD-MEDAL GAMES Saturday, July 20th Wamego City Park 10:00 am
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Visit our website for more information about summer events!

Students and their families are all invited to the Summer Reading Program Kick-Off Party on June 5, 2024, at the Wamego Aquatic Center, where they can learn more and enjoy a free hour of swimming!

MAY StoryWalk®
Chosen by West Elementary
Read-a-Thon winner
Cade Campbell

Don't forget to stop past the Wamego Baseball Complex this month to check out the StoryWalk book selected and installed by West Elementary Read-a-Thon prize winner, Cade Campbell!

Music News:

All of the students' recorders were sent home. Be on the lookout for them. Please keep them in a safe place over the summer. Third and Fourth Grade students will need them next year for music as well.

All classes finished playing the recorders, as well as learned some fun songs to sing.

Third Grade students learned the Swahili Song “Sansa Kroma”. They also learned a fun game song called “Bump Up Tomato.”

Fourth Grade learned the song “Little Wheel A’ Turning” that they added a stick passing accompaniment.

Fifth Grade students learned the cup passing games “Clap Clap Butterfly” and “I’ve Been to Harlem”. Fifth grade also visited residents of our area nursing homes and assisted living facilities and sang.



P.E. News:

In the month of May, we finished our school year strong by hosting our annual Play Day at the City Park for Third and Fourth Grade. It was a fun-filled day and are thankful that the weather stayed clear to allow us to spend both days outside.

Thank you so much to all parents who volunteered their time and/or snacks for the day. The day truly could not run without those parent volunteers, and they all did a wonderful job getting in the mix with the kids!

I hope everyone has a great and safe summer. We will miss those kids this summer and we are very thankful that you entrust us to pour into your kids every day!

Technology News:

Third Graders continued to work on coding with Dash robots. In the final lesson, they created their own mazes on the ground and programmed the robots to solve the maze. For the rest of the month, Third Grade finished up their typing trackers by working through the beginner lessons on Typing.com.

Fourth Graders completed the Everfi financial literacy software and received a certificate of completion. They also had the chance to review some of their typing skills.

Fifth Graders finished their Dream Vacation Google slides project. They used various websites to discover their destination’s weather forecasts, famous attractions and restaurants, as well as cultural

facts. They learned about citing their sources by including a reference page. All grade levels had the opportunity to learn about Sunflower Summer, a program offering free entrance into museums, parks, and attractions for children and their families in the state of Kansas.

