

**West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
May 8, 2024**

Enrollment:

Third Grade: 121

Fourth Grade – 100

Fifth Grade – 126

Total – 347

New Students: 1 Third Grader, 1 Fourth Grader, 1 Fifth Grader

Withdrawn Students: 1 Third Grader, 3 Fourth Graders, 1 Fifth Grader

West Building Leadership Team Updates

The West BLT is meeting on Wednesday, May 8 for our last meeting of the year. Please see the attached agenda for further details on topics we will be addressing. [WES BLT Agenda May 8, 2024](#)

Transition Activities

We have implemented a variety of activities to better support our students transitioning from Second to Third Grade and from Fifth to Sixth Grade. These include Transition Visits for both grade levels.

Second Grade will visit West Elementary on Thursday, May 16 and meet with Mrs. Flinn and the Third Grade Teachers. They will also receive a tour of the school. Mrs. Dow has made multiple trips to West with students that demonstrate high anxiety to help ease some of their concerns and start to build connections for these students. We have done the same thing with some of our Fifth Graders that need these extra visits. Thank you to Mrs. Graber, Mrs. McCarter, Miss Smith, and Mrs. Bieberle for assisting with these visits.

We did have to cancel our Move Up Night for Central and West, due to the impending weather on May 6, but we are taking care of this in house with our staff taking each grade level “up” to the other grade level hallways to visit and meet the teachers. Fifth Grade will make have Move Up Night on Thursday, May 16 at WMS.

Back to School Night/Parent Night Fall 2024

We tried to do this at the beginning of the year, but had to shift, due to our new interactive boards/projectors not being installed until late. In the past, Back to School Night was an open house format where parents and students could come to the school in a come and go format and drop off school supplies, meet the teacher, and see their classroom. Parent Night was generally held two weeks after school started and was more formalized, with a presentation by each teacher in his/her classroom. After input from PLC Teams and our BLT last year, we will combine the two events to increase our attendance for “Parent Night”. Generally, we have had 100% attendance at Back to School Night and more like 55-60% at Parent Night.

We will be having this event on **Monday, August 12**. The schedule (at this time) is as follows:

- 5:15pm - Fifth Grade
- 6:15pm - Fourth Grade
- 7:15pm - Third Grade

Students will drop off their supplies/backpacks and then be dismissed to a specified location with other staff. Teachers will present to their parents/guardians for about 30 minutes with each session lasting no more than 45 minutes total. We are still working on details of what we will be doing with the children that attend during that time, but we will have a plan by August! Again, our entire point is to get as close to 100% attendance as

possible!

New Staff

We are so excited to welcome McKenzie Ontjes as our new PE teacher and Mikaela Zerbe as our new Family and Community Resource Liaison! These two individuals will be great additions to our team. Miss Ontjes will graduate from K-State this weekend and Mrs. Zerbe is a former elementary teacher. She just got married in April and is excited to make Wamego her home. Both are very excited to be working with USD 320!

West Elementary Items for the Good – May 8, 2024

- **MTSS Team Professional Development Update**

West Elementary is in the process of completing our FastBridge Spring Benchmarking Assessments. The MTSS team has already started the process of analyzing the data and seeing the progress students have made throughout the year. We also have multiple years of FastBridge data on each student that teachers can review to determine individual growth. Each intervention teacher continues to meet with our students individually to share their results on the FastBridge data. Sharing progress with students motivates and makes them more accountable for their own learning. This is always an exciting time of year where we can celebrate students' success with them.

The MTSS team is beginning the process of transitioning students to the Middle School. Student visits, creating documents, updating all caseloads/data and sharing relevant information with the Middle School will help the transition be more smooth and successful.

Marcia Beachler will be retiring this year after serving 36 years in the field of Special Education. She has really enjoyed her teaching career. She has been blessed to work with many wonderful students, families, and co-workers. She is grateful to have had this opportunity to work in this district and learn from so many other educators. We are going to miss her tremendously!

- **Third Grade News:**

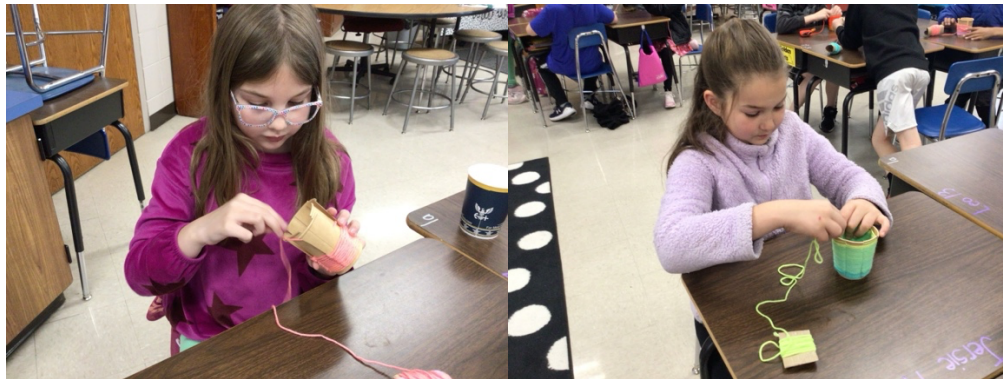
Third Graders Support Honor Flight:

Mrs. Wilber's Third Grade class had the honor of writing letters to the veterans who went on the Wamego High School Honor Flight. Students were assigned a specific veteran and then wrote a personalized letter thanking them for their service to our country. Students also colored posters for the veterans to open up during mail call on the first night of their trip. This was a wonderful opportunity for the students to show appreciation to our veterans for the sacrifices they made for our country.



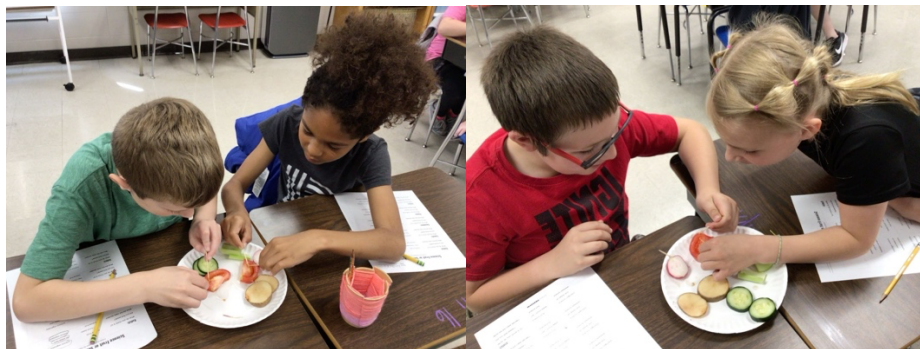
Third Graders Basket Weaving:

In English Language Arts, Third Grade students learned how some Native Americans first migrated from Asia to North America, how many scientists think they spread throughout the continents of North America and South America, and how their ways of obtaining food changed over the years. Students learned details about how people adapted to the environment of the region in which they settled and how that adaptation shaped their customs and cultures. As a culminating activity for the unit, students created their baskets in cup weaving. This was a great way to provide a hands-on activity that followed the storyline of one of the texts the students read called Alemeda, the Basket Weaver.



Third Grade Science – Fruit or Vegetable:

Third Grade students have been discovering how plants reproduce in hands-on exploration labs during science class. In one lesson, students became plant scientists and examined common grocery store produce of radishes, tomatoes, potatoes, celery, and cucumbers. First, students created predictions if the items were a science fruit or science vegetable. Then, students were able to take the role of a plant scientist to explore “hands-on” by looking at slices of produce to search for seeds. Finally, as a class, the students drew their own conclusions if the items were a science fruit or a science vegetable.



- **Fourth Grade News:**

Fourth Grade Book Tasting:

Fourth Grade classes participated in a "Book Tasting" this month! Teachers set up their rooms "cafe style" and presented multiple books for each of five genres. Students rotated through the five genres taking about 15-20 minutes to read a "snippet" of a book or two within each genre. Students enjoyed lemonade and snacks as they rotated around and completed a book review of each book they got a "taste" of!



Fourth Grade 50 State Showcase:

After months of hard work researching the United States regions, Fourth Graders proudly displayed their knowledge at the Annual 50 States Showcase! Each student chose one specific state to research the Climate, Culture, Landforms, Landmarks, and Products/Resources. They drafted and typed their information into structured paragraphs, organized and created a poster with those write-ups and pictures, and even built a diorama of their state at home! One new aspect of the project this year was that students also researched a famous person from their state. Students wrote scripts from that person's point of view and dressed like their person for the showcase! Family, friends, and West Elementary students and staff were invited to the Fourth Grade 50 States Showcase to see the incredible work done by each student!



- **Fifth Grade News:**

- **Fifth Graders Observe Solar Eclipse Together:**

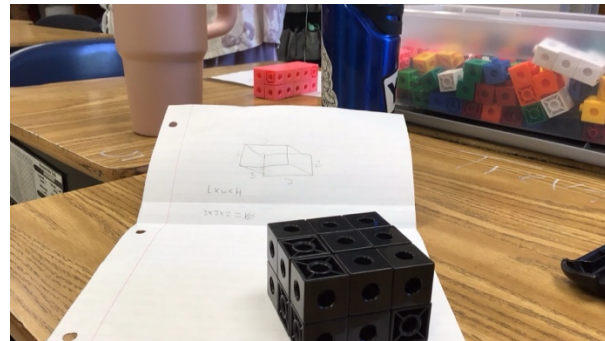
On April 8, Fifth Grade West Elementary students safely observed the solar eclipse together. Students also participated in educational activities in the classroom to expand their knowledge and experience with the solar eclipse. Students created pinhole viewers to use during the eclipse.



- **Fifth Grade Math – Drawing, Analysis, and Classification of Two-Dimensional Figures**

This spring, Fifth Grade students are learning about 2D shapes and working with volume in math class. Students used unit cubes to practice volume by drawing, analyzing, and creating their own rectangular prisms.

Students have also been working on analyzing and classifying quadrilaterals. Students answered the question “When is a quadrilateral classified as a kite?” by creating their own. Mrs. Price’s class took their kites for a flight.



- **Congratulations to Region 1 Semi-Finalist for Kansas Teacher of the Year, Sara Greene!**

We are beyond excited to share with you all that Fourth Grade Teacher Sara Greene from West Elementary School was named as one of three semi-finalists for Region 1 Kansas Teacher of the Year at the annual KTOY Banquet in Salina, KS on Saturday, April 6. Mrs. Greene is an amazing educator who focuses on providing a warm, nurturing, and highly effective learning environment for all students. Each year, school districts can nominate one elementary and one secondary teacher for the Kansas Teacher of the Year Program. The selection committee for KTOY narrows this down to three semi-finalists in each region (four regions total) for the elementary and secondary levels and one finalist

from the three semi-finalists in each category to go on for the Kansas Teacher of the Year title.

Mrs. Greene had a tremendous showing of support for this award! The entire Fourth Grade Team from West Elementary attended the banquet, along with Principal Amy Flinn, Superintendent Rob McKim, and BOE Members Deb Long, Jolene Meyer, and Michael Billings. We are also proud of our secondary nominee, Beth Aldridge from Wamego High School, who was also selected as a semi-finalist for Region 1 for the secondary level. Wamego USD 320 is full of amazing teachers and staff!

Mrs. Greene also had many members of her family in attendance, including her husband, son, parents, in-laws, grandparents, sister, brother-in-law, aunt, uncle, and niece. What a special day and event this was for two of our best and brightest in USD 320. It's a great day to be a Raider!



- **Abby Ross Named Kansas Professional Society of Engineer, Tri-Valley Chapter's, Outstanding Elementary Teacher of the Year!**

Title I Reading Specialist and Math Interventionist, Abby Ross, from West Elementary in Wamego was awarded as the Kansas Society of Professional Engineers (KSPE) Tri-Valley Chapter's Outstanding Elementary Teacher of the Year. Abby was nominated by this chapter and will now compete for the state KSPE Outstanding Elementary Teacher Award. Abby was nominated for her work as a Math Interventionist, Reading Specialist, and for her various leadership roles within the district.

Kansas Society of Professional Engineers (KSPE) is the state association affiliated with the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) and is composed of seven chapters around the state. KSPE works with an appointed lobbyist at the Kansas State capitol building. Their collective goal is to support/oppose legislation that upholds standards to obtain PE licensure, expands the professional engineer's role in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and advocates against the devaluation of licensure. KSPE supports STEM/STEAM program initiatives and holds annual local educational programs for elementary students: Math Counts and Future Cities. Annually, KSPE nominates and awards individuals at the chapter and state levels for their support and advocating for Professional Engineers (PE), including teachers helping teach the next generation of future PEs.

Congratulations to Mrs. Ross! We are so grateful for her service and leadership in our school and district.



- **5th Annual FFA/Ag Day at West Elementary School**

It was another great day for some FFA Ag Day fun at West Elementary School on a cool, but beautiful, April 23 day! Tuesday was our 5th Annual FFA Ag Day Olympics, hosted by the WHS FFA and Sponsors, Andy Morton and Ashley Carr. The WHS FFA Officers planned the day for our students and did a wonderful job planning engaging, hands-on stations that taught our students more about the important field of agriculture.

Each class rotated through eight different stations over the course of about 80 minutes. The stations included such topics as Each class rotated through eight different stations over the course of about 70 minutes. The stations included such topics as Roping and Horses, Livestock, Baler and Tractor Safety, Milking Station, Ag Games, Ear Tag Drawing and Sheep, Planting, and Relay Race. Students loved the hands-on activities and learned more information about agriculture and various aspects of the world of agriculture. It is important for our students to understand more about this topic, as agriculture is a top industry in our state, country, and world.

We appreciate the efforts of our local FFA students, along with their sponsor, Mr. Andy Morton and Miss Ashley Carr, on providing this unique learning opportunity for our students. It was definitely a worthwhile, fun day for all!



- **High Voltage/Jazz Band Performance May 8**

Our students and staff loved hosting the Wamego High School Jazz Band and High Voltage singers today, May 8! They did a wonderful job and we were thoroughly entertained!



- **Rescheduled Field Trips for West**

We have rescheduled Third Grade and part of Fourth Grade's field trips, due to the weather last week. Mrs. Meinhardt and Mrs. Wilber's classes will go to the Topeka Capitol Building on May 13. Mrs. Blume, Mrs. Haynes, Mrs. Linn, and Mrs. Williams' classes will go to the Topeka Capitol Building on May 15. Mrs. Greene and Mrs. McIntosh's classes will go to K-State on May 16.

- **West Elementary Talent Shows Friday, May 10 and Monday, May 20:**

- May 10 - Fifth Grade - 8:10-9:35am (Only Fifth Grade will watch in the gym. We will Zoom to other grades.)
- May 20 - Fourth Grade - 11:30am-1:15pm (Only Fourth Grade will watch in the gym. We will Zoom to other grades.)
- May 20 - Third Grade - 1:25-3:10pm (Only Third Grade will watch in the gym. We will Zoom to other grades.)

- **USD 320 Retirement Reception - May 15**

We are so excited to honor and recognize our USD 320 retirees at a reception on Wednesday, May 15 from 3:45-5:00pm at the PLC Building. Congratulations to Mrs. Anita Aubert, Mrs. Marcia Beachler, Mr. Curtis Eckart, Mrs. Pam Hendricks, Mrs. Kathryn Mayfield, Dr. Deb Naverth, Ms. Kim Nelson, Mrs. Mary Piper, and Mr. Greg Webb!

- **Senior Drive By**

Our seniors will be driving by on 6th Street on Friday, May 17 around 9:00am. I'll be announcing when it is time for students to move to the sidewalk. The seniors will NOT be throwing candy this year. Your class can make posters, or simply wave and cheer.

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

Library News:

April has been a busy month in the library! If You Laugh, I'm Starting This Book Over won our March Madness Book Bracket. Perfect for fans of The Book With No Pictures, The Serious Goose, and Press Here, this hilarious interactive picture book is guaranteed to be a major hit!

In addition, students recently cast their votes for the William Allen White Children's Book Award, which is the oldest statewide children's book award in the United States. The White Awards Program was established to encourage the children of Kansas to read and enjoy good books.

In class, we've been exploring the reference section of the library, including the dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, encyclopedia, and almanac.

We'll close the month out with our Scholastic Buy 1, Get 1 FREE* Book Fair which will connect kids to fun books and inspiring characters with the opportunity to double their reading fun before summer vacation starts. The Spring Book Fair is no doubt THE place for ultimate "book joy" and a welcome event for our students.

Music News:

Students have been very excited to hear about the Talent Show for this year. Parents are invited to attend. Please check in with the office before going to the gym.

- Fifth Grade - Friday, May 10, 2024 8:10 - 9:30 am
- Fourth Grade - Monday, May 20, 2024 11:30-1:15 pm
- Third Grade - Monday, May 20, 2024 1:25-3:10 pm

All classes have worked on recorders this month and are really sounding good!

Third Grade worked on pitches B, A, and G. A few songs they played are "Hot Cross Buns", "Merrily We Roll Along", "Gently Sleep", and "Frog in the Meadow".

Fourth Grade worked on pitches B, A, G, Low E, Low D and High C. A few songs they played are "Old MacDonald", "Lullaby", "French Song", "Rain Rain", and "Hi! High C". They finished with the Jamaican Folk Song, "Lost my Gold Ring", by playing in three part harmony.

Fifth Grade worked on pitches B,A,G, Low E, Low D, High C and High D. A few songs they played are "Skin and Bones", "Hosisipa", "Jolly Old St. Nicholas", "This Little Light of Mine", and "Good Night Ladies".

Fifth Grade classes have also prepared a few songs to sing at our area nursing home and care facilities in May.

P.E. News:

During the month of April, we began our pickleball unit. This is a great unit where we teach students the basic fundamentals and basic gameplay. We also discuss the different amazing community resources available, like the City Park, to go to and play this lifelong sport. Additionally, Third and Fourth Grade will have the opportunity to play pickleball as part of their stations during Play Day this May. If you have any interest in volunteering or bringing a snack/drink, Mrs. Flinn sent out a volunteer form a couple weeks back. We sure appreciate all volunteers and are looking forward to an awesome Play Day!

Technology News:

This month in Technology, students in Third Grade continued their typing skills in typing.com. They are working towards their end-of-year goals and completing all of the lessons in the Beginner level. In the last weeks of April, they transitioned to robotics and coding. They used Dash robots and have been practicing coding their robots to go through floor mazes using the Blockly app.

The Fourth Graders continue to work on financial literacy and money management through Everfi. They reinforced the Everfi content by using review games in Blooket.

In Fifth Grade, students continue to work on their dream vacation research projects in Google Slides. They are using both print and online resources as references and learning skills such as shortcuts for copying and pasting and formatting text boxes and images in presentation slides.

