

West Items for the Good for October 2022

- **MTSS Benchmark Screening & MTSS Reading Groups**

Beginning of the year testing has been completed at West Elementary School! Our students were assessed on a variety of math and reading skills through FastBridge, our benchmarking program. In the area of reading, all of our students were assessed using CBMreading English, which is an oral reading fluency passage. On this assessment, students read a grade level passage aloud to their teacher and were assessed on fluency and accuracy. All students were also assessed using a test called aReading. This is a broad reading assessment where the questions adapt to the student's reading level during the assessment. This is the second year that our fourth and fifth graders took a new short assessment called AUTOREading. Depending on grade level, this timed component is a quick measure that could include encoding, vocabulary, word identification, synonyms, and morphology.

All grade levels at West Elementary took two math assessments called aMath and CBMmath Automaticity. On the aMath assessment, students complete various math problems, across standards. Question difficulty adjusts based on student responses. This is an untimed assessment. On the CBMmath Automaticity assessment, students answered math fact questions about addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. This assessment is timed and assesses a student's ability to answer questions automatically.

The MTSS team and classroom teachers worked together to use this data to create groupings based on student performance. At West, a student could receive extra support from any teacher including a classroom teacher, a resource room teacher, or a Title I teacher. We have been digging through all student data, both for this year and from previous years, to gain a better understanding of student performance.

We are working with students on becoming more confident in reading multisyllabic words, which will support the increasing text complexity within the classroom in math, science, and social studies. These groupings are completely flexible and can all change based on performance and assessment.

- **Anti-Bullying Awareness Week at West October 3-7, 2022**

We will recognize Anti-Bullying Awareness Week this coming week! The following "theme" days will be recognized.

- **Monday, October 3** - Choose Peace - (60's, Peace Power Wear)
- **Tuesday, October 4** - Be Your Best Self (Dress your best for Picture Day!)
- **Wednesday, October 5** - Put Bullying to Bed (Pajama Day)
- **Thursday, October 6** - Give Bullying the Boot! (Wester Wear)
- **Friday, October 7** - We Are In This Together - Pink Out (Pink is the international color for bullying prevention. Wear PINK!)

Mrs. Butler will be sharing more information during Counselor Classes this week on Bullying Prevention and Classroom Teachers will be teaching our Bullying Prevention Unit from Second Step during the month of October.

Thank you for encouraging your children to be kind and respectful to ALL. Developing young men and women of integrity is so important and we are proud of our West Junior Raiders for being Champions in all aspects of life!

- **Third Graders Explore Plant Reproduction in Science**

Third Grade students have been discovering how plants reproduce in hand on exploration labs during science class. In one lesson, students became plant scientists and examined common grocery store produce of a radish, tomato, potato, celery, and cucumber. 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 experience hands-on science exploration by looking at slices of produce to search for seeds. Finally, as a class the students drew their final conclusions if the items were a science fruit or a science vegetable.



- **Third Graders Study Pollination in Science**

Third Grade students have been learning about pollination in science. Students were able to create their own flower models out of paper. Then, they made a bee model from pipe cleaners. Students flew their bees from flower to flower with cornmeal and coffee grounds as their pollen. During the activity, students observed that their bees carried the pollen from flower to flower. Students learned that bees and other pollinators help flowers pollinate. The pollinators get sweet nectar from the flowers and the flowers in return get pollinated to produce seeds.



- **Third Graders Visit Bison Farm**

Third Graders classes made a trip to The Lazy Heart D Bison Ranch the last week of September. This field trip was a culmination of their English Language Arts unit on animal classification. During this unit, students read and learned about the five classes of vertebrates. On the tour, students were able to see the vertebrae bones of the bison. Ed Dillinger shared his vast knowledge of bison with the students. One important thing Ed stressed to students was that bison are very territorial animals. One highlight of the trip included the students taking a wagon ride to the pasture and feeding the bison pellets. The students were able to even place the pellets directly into the bison's mouths. During the trip, Ed also drove the wagon to the original location of the Dutch Mill. He shared historical information on how the mill was built and used to grind grain. The students learned how the mill was taken down stone by stone, numbered, and placed in 35 horse drawn wagons and brought to the City Park for everyone to enjoy. The trip was a fantastic experience that the students will not forget!



- **Fourth Graders Learn about Animal Structures with Monarch Butterfly Experiment**

Recently, the Fourth Grade team ordered monarch rearing kits from Monarch Watch, a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program based at the University of Kansas, that focuses on the monarch butterfly, its habitat, and its spectacular fall migration. We were able to use the funds provided by our PTO to purchase these kits for each classroom.

What a fabulous learning experience this has been so far! Fourth grade science standards focus on plant and animal structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. Other concepts taught include that animals receive different types of information through their senses, process the information in their brain, and respond to the information in different ways. The monarch and the milkweed it eats as a caterpillar provide so many opportunities to explore these standards. One perfect example is the monarch's unbelievable fall migration to Mexico, which is an adaptation to support survival.

As of right now, we have spent the last few weeks with our students helping our larva grow and molt into the chrysalis stage. We are anxiously awaiting the emergence of our adult butterflies, which we will release to allow them to participate in their fall migration. This project has provided so many wonderful conversations in our classrooms and allowed to provide such a tangible, real-life experience for students to relate to as we look forward to our plant and animal adaptations unit in science.



- **West Fourth Graders Explore Oregon Trail**

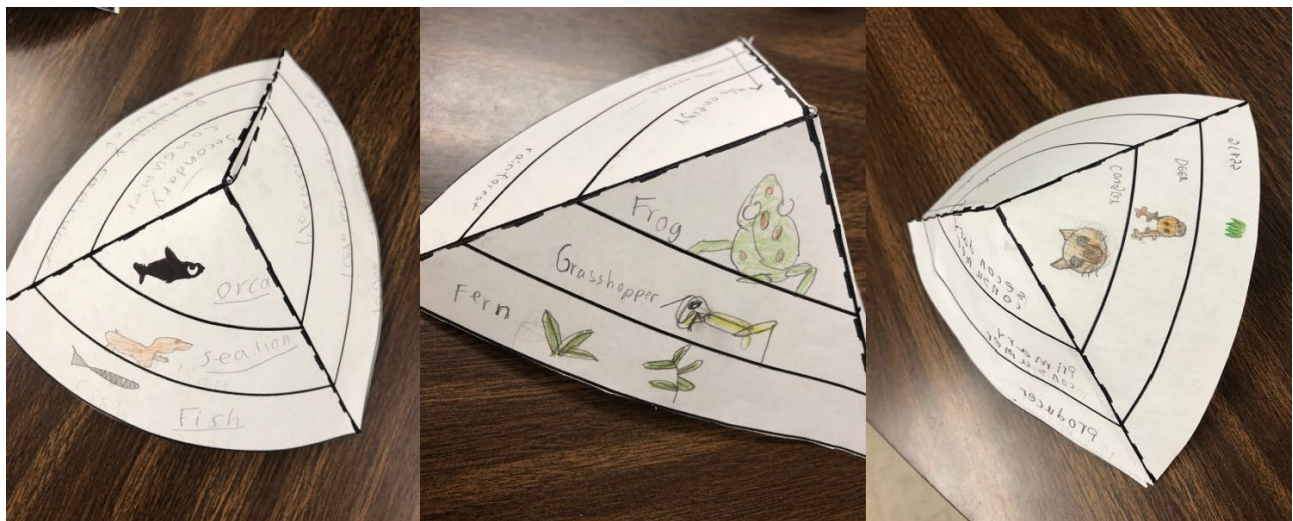
Fourth Graders have been learning about the Westward Trails that went through Kansas. We had the opportunity to visit Alcove Springs to explore the area where pioneers would have traveled along the Oregon Trail. We were able to walk in the wagon ruts, listen to interesting information told by local historians, make a tin punch ornament, hike to the overlook, see Alcove Spring that still bubbles from the ground, and check out the rocks that were carved into by some of the first pioneers that stopped to camp on their long journey to Oregon!





- Fifth Grade Completes Ecosystems Unit in Science**

Fifth Grade wrapped up their Ecosystems unit in science with a 3-D project to research a specific food chain from producer through secondary consumer. For example, in the European tundra, lichen (producer) are eaten by reindeer (primary consumer), which can then be eaten by a wolf (secondary consumer). In this unit, we looked at how energy was transferred within food chains and food webs.



- Fifth Grade Writes Personal Narratives**

Fifth Grade students wrapped up their Personal Narratives CKLA unit by writing "Surprise" Narratives to describe a time they were surprised, either good or bad. We focused on adding sensory details (sights, sounds, emotions), as well as dialogue between characters in the narrative. We also reviewed figurative language (similes and metaphors) that would add to the skill of writing descriptively.

- News from West Specialized Team: Art, Counselor, Library, Music, P.E., and Technology**

Art News for October – Mrs. Havice:

As the students began adding color to their Art Folder designs based on the artwork of Charles Demuth during September, lots of color based questions arose. One of the most frequently asked questions with regards to color was, "Can I use yellow green or green yellow, if the color I need has both words on the wrapper?" In reality, even though it appears as if it would be okay to interchange colors, in art, yellow green and green yellow are completely different colors. The students just didn't understand why it would work changing the order of numbers in a multiplication problem for math class, but not with art class. However, after examining some of the colors with flipped color names, it was obvious that they were definitely not the same colors.

To help understand color more in depth, we began working in team groups to complete four different types of color wheels that will be used as tools when working with color from now on. The four types we created were Intermediate (features the colors that are made when mixing a primary and secondary color together), Analogous (features colors that are part of a similar color family), Complementary Colors (featuring both the secondary colors and intermediate color complementary colors), as well as Split-Complementary Colors (where instead of using the colors opposite from one another, you use the color to the left and right of the complement to create a y-shaped pattern).

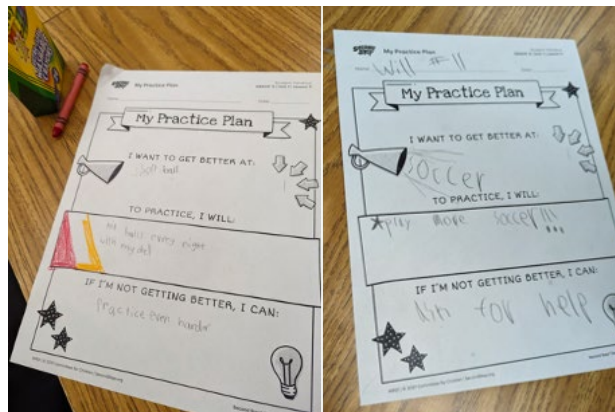


Art Folder Cover samples of student artwork from all three grade levels at West Elementary

Counselor News for October – Mrs. Butler:

During September, students at West Elementary learned about Growth Mindset and Goal Setting during Second Step lessons.

Third Grade students learned about how networks connect in the brain when they learn something new. They then learned about the importance of practice in making the networks stronger. The students finished Unit 1 with a performance task where they wrote their own practice plan for a skill they wanted to improve. Below are a couple of their plans.



Fourth Grade spent their time learning about goal setting by making a class goal and working toward reaching that goal. First, the class worked together to set a goal that is specific, challenging, and doable. Then they made a plan that includes actions, materials, and supports to help them achieve their goal. After two weeks, the students monitored their progress and discussed roadblocks they experienced. Finally, the students completed their goal and reflected on their progress. Their performance task was working in groups to complete a cup challenge. They made a goal and worked together through the process as they tried to stack 6 cups using only a rubber band and strings without touching the cups with their hands. It was a fun, yet frustrating experience.



Finally, the Fifth Graders also worked with the goal setting process, but focused on a personal goal. Each student chose a skill they wanted to improve in two weeks and wrote a personal goal for that skill. Throughout Unit 1, they measured and monitored their progress toward their goal completion. Their performance task was to choose either to learn 5 jokes, 8 facts about a cool animal, or a new dance move in 10 minutes. Using Epic as a resource, all students worked hard toward reaching their goal even when roadblocks emerged.

During Explore class, the students continue to learn about their future career options, and the 21st century skills they'll need to succeed as they complete missions in Xello. The missions students are working on to complete are:

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

Library News for October – Mrs. Hatfield and Miss Garrett:

This month, we recognized International **Dot Day** in the library, inspired by Peter Reynold’s book *The Dot*. In class, students celebrated their creativity by illustrating pop-up readers. Students customized their readers, books, background, etc. to showcase their personal interests. Check out all of our awesome readers at West Elementary!

Next, we will be exploring dots in a different context. After reading *Six Dots: a story of young Louis Braille* by Jen Bryant, we will be searching a wide range of resources to find answers to our questions about Braille. Look for updates in the following Items for the Good!



Music News for October – Mrs. Hermesch:

If you have a recorder at home that your child will be using this year, please send it to school. If you would like to purchase a recorder, they are \$6. Money can be sent to the West Elementary Office. You can also make a payment by phone.

In Third Grade, they have been learning how to sing the patriotic songs “America”, “America the Beautiful”, “The Star Spangled Banner” and “You’re a Grand Old Flag”. They learned 3 new international dances: Kinderpolka from Germany, La Raspa from Mexico, and Sasha from Russia. They reviewed the Solfege Syllables So, La and Mi by singing the songs “Golden Rule” and “Apple Tree”. They played the “Apple Tree” Game. They learned the song “A Rig a Jig Jig”. We added a partner hand clap rhythm to half of the song. Students traveled around the room and found a partner to do the hand clap with. They reviewed identifying Treble Clef notes by playing the game “Caught in a Spiderweb”. Students listened to the song “In the Hall of the Mountain King” by Edward Grieg and performed movement with the song.



Fourth Graders learned the rhyme “Bubble Gum Bubble Gum”. We first spoke it rhythmically and patted the rhythms on our laps. We practiced leaving certain words out and thinking them in our heads. We then added different musical instruments and performed their particular rhythm. We also learned the rhyme “Get Down”. We added a spoken ostinato to it and performed it in two parts. We sang a song from Ghana called

“Sansa Kroma”. We added an ostinato to it as well and performed it in two parts with a conga drum accompaniment. They listened to the book Possum Come a Knockin and added a singing part, drums, and rhythm sticks. We sang the song “Old Tom White” to prepare for playing it on our recorders. They reviewed identifying treble clef notes by playing the game “Caught in a Spiderweb”. They had to create their own 8-beat rhythm pattern with movement. They performed their creation while listening to the song “La Bastingue”. Students reviewed the song “Peas Porridge Hot” and created their own Porridge Compositions. They were given short rhythms and they had to organize them in their own way and perform them for the class.



Fifth Grade students have started working on their concert music! The show is called “Hawaiian Beach Party”. It should be a lot of fun. The date for the performance is Monday, November 28th. More information will be sent out in October. Earlier in the month, they did their own Apple compositions. They created rhythms using names of apples and performed them as a B section with our rhyme “An Apple A Day”. They have several new vocal warm-ups such as “I Can Sing High Notes” and “Dum Dum Diddy Diddy”. Ask them to show you how to perform these. They had to improvise a rhythm pattern using body percussion as we spoke the rhyme “Operator Operator”. We also listened to the song “Pink Panther” by Henry Mancini and used body percussion to play the rhythms.



Physical Education News for October – Mr. Beam:

During the month of September, all classes participated in the West Elementary Fastest Class Challenge. Each class collectively ran as many laps as they could around the gym for 5 minutes. Congratulations to Ms. Hirt’s class as they ran 297 laps around the gym together as a class! They will now get to keep the Fastest Class Trophy in their classroom for the rest of the 1st Semester.



Technology News for October – Mrs. Hatfield and Miss Garrett:

This month in Technology class, students continued to work on introductory computer skills such as mouse coordination, memorizing and typing usernames and passwords, and we began our lessons on digital citizenship.

In Explore, we have been focusing on team building and problem solving in our groups. We began our first STEM challenge - Paper Plate Marble Runs. Students spent a day discussing what their group norms would be and making a plan for how to handle conflict when it arose. They also drew a blueprint for their marble run. The next class period, they built their marble runs! The creativity they showed me was incredible and I am so excited for them to put the final touches on these projects and test them next week. This project wouldn't have been possible without the community rallying and sending as many toilet paper tubes and paper towel tubes as they could!



