

**West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good  
October 4, 2023**

**Enrollment:**

Third Grade: 126 – 1 new student this past month  
Fourth Grade – 104 – 2 new students this past month  
Fifth Grade – 129 – 1 new student this past month  
Total – 359

**Out-of-District:**

Third Grade – 3  
Fourth Grade – 5  
Fifth Grade – 11

**West Elementary Volunteer Program**

After months of searching for para-educators and hiring and losing para-educators far too frequently, I have been working on brainstorming ideas to get more support to my students and staff. I reached out to our church leaders and Chamber of Commerce and created a flyer to recruit volunteers to work at West Elementary, specifically in classrooms, under the direct supervision and guidance of our teachers. This idea was generated through input at Site Council meetings and working with PLC Teams. After several weeks of planning and recruiting, I am excited to share that I have recruited 10 volunteers from our community, several of whom are retired teachers and other former USD 320 staff. These individuals are currently providing 37 hours of volunteer time in our school! We are working on expanding this program and volunteer opportunities and look forward to increasing our support base in the future. Thank you to the following individuals for sharing their time and talents with our students and staff: Mary Kay Elder, Pam Eshelman, Susan Hatfield, Aimee Heinisch, Kay Ann Hewlett, Sharon Jensen, Libby Mize, Marcus Merritt, Roxie Peterson, and Alex Rossow! Thank you also to our community church leaders and business leaders for sharing this information with their contact base!

**Targeting Chronic Absenteeism at West Elementary**

We have been working to build awareness of the importance of regular attendance and the impact of chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of the school year) with our families at West. I have been sending out regular communication regarding this topic, as well as sharing resources on my Principal's Blog and social media pages. Mr. Meitler has created a helpful spreadsheet that allows us to pull attendance for our students on a regular basis to watch for trends on chronic absenteeism to hopefully get ahead of this problem with more of our students and their families. Reducing chronic absenteeism is also part of the work we are doing with TASN to address our Behavioral/Social Emotional needs through the MTSS process.

**Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> Update – Coaching and Professional Development with Courtney Hickman of Great Minds**

Our EM2 Coach, Courtney Hickman is amazing! We had a very intense, but meaningful day, working with her and receiving training on doing Guided Observations for EM2 on September 26 and October 4. Thank you to the 8 teachers that we observed (Haynes, Linn, Meinhardt, Ruby, Vanderpool, Eckart, Price, and Rowe).

Mrs. Dow and I have decided it would be more beneficial to have Ms. Hickman come back on **November 6** during our PLC/PD Day and spend half a day with West and half a day with Central providing targeted PD/Coaching. She'll then be in both buildings for a half day each on **November 7**. We will keep the **January 30/31** dates and not have her come back **March 26/27**, which we think will be better for teachers overall anyway.

## FastBridge Fall Benchmarking Results

Our staff will be reviewing our FastBridge Fall Data at our Faculty Meeting on Wednesday, October 4. We will be looking for trends, celebrations, and goals for the future. You can review our fall data here: [Fall FastBridge Data Review](#)

### **West Items for the Good – October 4, 2023**

- **WHS Government Students Present to West Students for Constitution Day/Celebrate Freedom Week!**  
We enjoyed hosting students from Mr. Adam Topliff's WHS Government Classes for Celebrate Freedom Week/Constitution Day! Groups of high school students worked on creating a presentation for our Fourth and Fifth Grade students that broke down each of the 6 Ideals of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. They then jointly presented this information to two classes at a time on Monday, September 18 and Tuesday, September 19.

We love to partner with our fellow Red Raiders here in USD 320 and this was a great way to make that happen! We also have enjoyed teaching our students more about our founding documents this week, including the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, as part of our focus on Celebrate Freedom Week.



- **Upcoming Veterans Day Reception at West Elementary – November 10**

At West Elementary, we believe it is important to recognize and honor our veterans on or near the Veterans Day holiday. This year, we will be hosting our annual “Veterans Day Reception” on Friday, November 10 at 8:10am in our library. We will be providing coffee and cookies for our veterans (cookies made by USD 320 Food Service). Our Student Council members will be decorating the library in a patriotic theme and will be writing letters of thanks to lay on the tables in the library for the veterans to enjoy. Students are invited to bring a veteran that is a relative or family friend to enjoy this celebration.

Student Council has a special activity planned to show our appreciation for the veterans in our lives. Each teacher has been provided with “Veterans Day Hero” page for each student to complete. We will make a display with their final products like the one pictured below. These tributes will be displayed in our hallway throughout the month of November.



We are grateful to all our veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice!

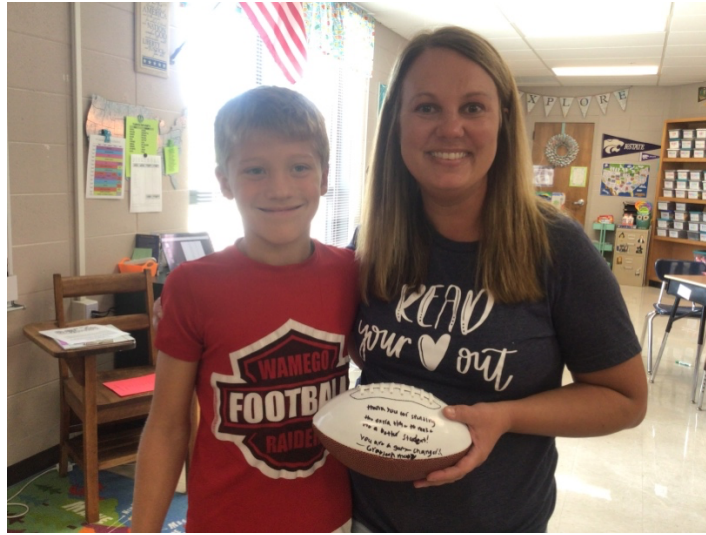
- **West Elementary USD 320 Teacher of the Year Nominees for 2025!**

Congratulations to Fourth Grade Teachers, Amanda Beason and Sara Greene, for being nominated for the USD 320 Elementary Teacher of the Year! Mrs. Beason and Mrs. Greene are wonderful educators and loyal employees of our district. They are now working on the application process for the USD 320 Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, which will meet on Friday, October 13 to identify one elementary and one secondary candidate to move on to the Kansas Teacher of the Year process. Best wishes to all of our candidates!

- **Mrs. McIntosh Receives Game Ball from Grayson Moody**

West Elementary student, Grayson Moody, provided his teacher, Jacy McIntosh, with the Junior Raider Fourth Grade Tackle Football Team game ball. Grayson was awarded the game ball for his performance in the win over Rock Creek. Grayson decided he wanted to “pay it forward” by recognizing his teacher with the game ball, due to the positive impact she has had on him and his classmates. We love the message he wrote on the ball before gifting it to Mrs. McIntosh: “Thank you for spending the extra time to make me a better student! You are a game changer!”

Thank you to Grayson for his thoughtfulness and thank you to Mrs. McIntosh for making a positive impact on the lives of our students! Grayson is the son of Weston and Kiley Moody of Wamego.



- **West Students and Staff Participate in WHS Homecoming Parade!**

It was a beautiful day for a parade on Friday, September 22! This year, student leaders at WHS petitioned the city to allow them to host a “Homecoming Parade”, which was a tradition for many years – many years ago! Our students at West have never been to a WHS Homecoming Parade and the district determined that it was important for all four schools to participate and show our Red Raider Nation spirit!

West students and staff walked to the downtown area and lined Lincoln Avenue from 8th Street to 4th Street (just like during our annual 4th of July Parade). Students from Central, West, WMS, and WHS all participated! It was so fun to listen to our WHS Marching Band perform, and to see the different floats for WHS Fall Sports – Football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Girls Tennis, and Girls Golf. We also saw a float sponsored by our FFA students and students in the Industrial Arts/Agriculture programs at WHS.

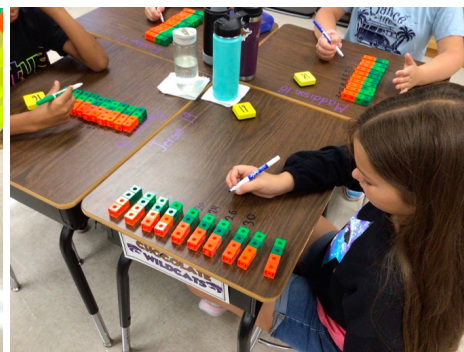
The WHS Cheerleaders and Dazzlers also marched in uniform and pumped up the spectators. Finally, the Homecoming Candidates were in the parade with each couple riding “in style” in various vehicle selections. Congratulations to all of the candidates – Olivia Hellman, Hope Jacobs, Rylie Meinhardt, Marissa Uhrich, Madelyn Weaber, Luke Isch, Mason King, Pruitt Nowlin, Drew Pettay, and Talon White! Congratulations to Drew Pettay and Rylie Meinhardt for being crowned Homecoming King and Queen prior to the WHS vs. Washington K.C. football game last night!

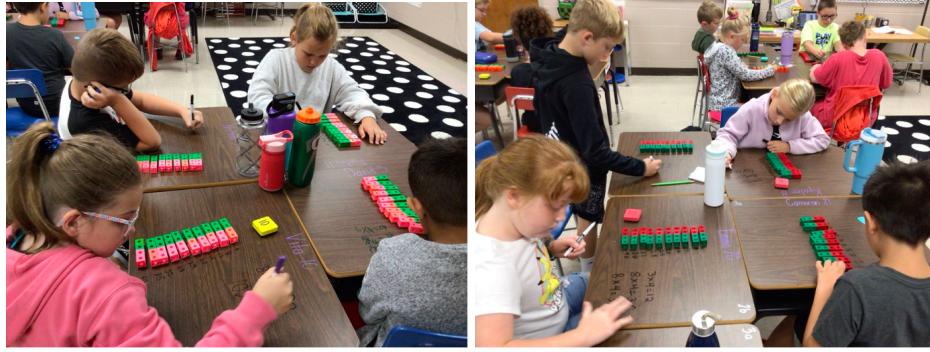
We are excited about re-establishing the Homecoming Parade tradition in Wamego and love showing our Red Raider pride!



- **Third Grade Learns More about Multiplication and Division in Math Class**

In September, Third Grade students have been learning about multiplication and division. In this first math module, students used repeated addition, equal groups, and arrays to solve multiplication and division problems. In this module, students focused on solving multiplication and division facts with units of 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10. Students used the distributive property (the break-apart strategy) to multiply. Students first broke apart the arrays at the concrete level with cubes and then progressed to using a pictorial representation. Breaking apart the larger arrays into two smaller known facts helped students solve the larger multiplication fact. Throughout the lesson, students used their understanding of multiplication and division to reason and solve one and two-step word problems.

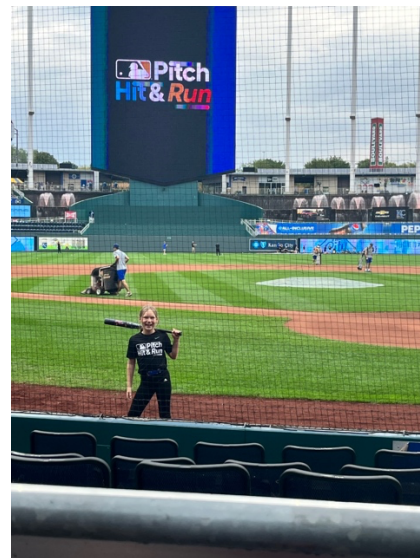




- Congratulations to West Student, Vienna Moody, Winner of KC Royals 8U Pitch, Hit, & Run Champion!**

We are so proud of West Elementary student, Vienna Moody, for recently being named the Kansas City Royals Pitch, Hit, & Run Champion in the 8U Softball Division! Vienna competed this past Saturday at Royals Stadium against other players. We love to recognize our students' accomplishments both within and outside of the school setting. Way to go, Vienna! Vienna is the daughter of Matt and Erin Moody of Wamego.

Vienna is officially going to compete in the MLB Pitch, Hit, & Run Championship at Game 2 of the World Series! We are so proud of her and so excited for her!



- October Is Bullying Prevention Month!**

Bullying Prevention Month is recognized the month of October. However, bullying prevention and our response to bullying behavior are critical at ALL TIMES during the school year to ensure we have a safe and welcoming environment for all children! To kick-off the recognition month, we will have a “theme” week **October 2-6, 2023**. See the graphic below for details. Also, our teachers will be teaching the Second Step Bullying Prevention Unit as part of our Social/Emotional Curriculum October 2 – October 23. Lessons will include the following topics:

**October 2: Lesson 1**

- Third Grade – Recognizing Bullying
- Fourth Grade – Recognize, Report, Refuse Bullying
- Fifth Grade – Recognize, Report, Refuse Bullying

### **October 9: Lesson 2**

- Third Grade – Reporting Bullying
- Fourth Grade – Bystander Power
- Fifth Grade – Bystander Power

### **October 16: Lesson 3**

- Third Grade – Refusing Bullying
- Fourth Grade – Bystander Responsibility
- Fifth Grade – Bystander Responsibility

### **October 23: Lesson 4**

- Third Grade – Bystander Power
- Fourth Grade – Bystanders to Cyberbullying
- Fifth Grade – Bystanders to Cyberbullying

- **West Students and Staff Recognize Patriot Day on 9/11**

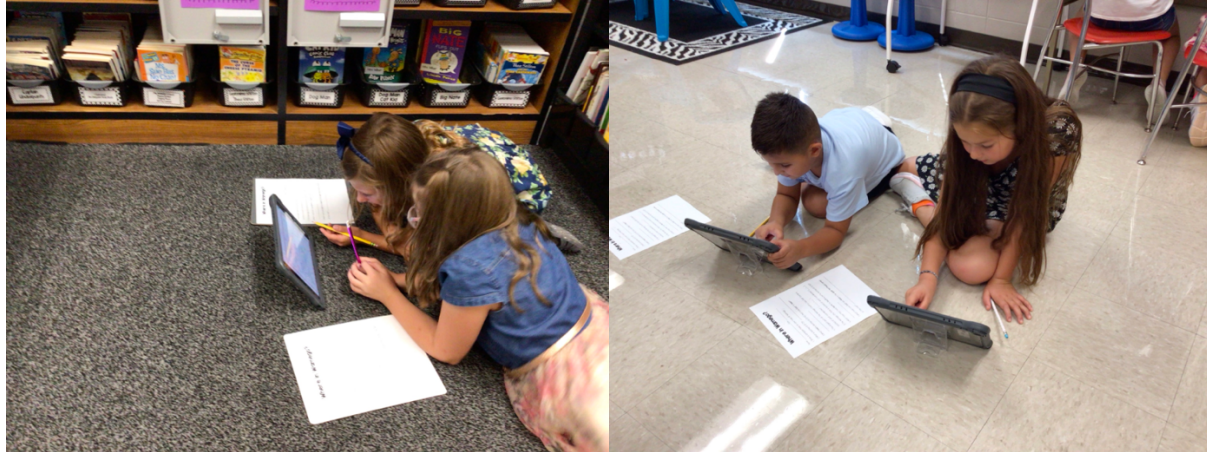
We are so proud of our staff and students for taking time to honor the fallen and all those impacted by the tragic events of 9/11/2001. It was a special and sobering day.



- **Third Grade Studies Maps in Social Studies**

In Third Grade, students learned about maps as their first unit of study in social studies. Students learned about all the different parts that make up a map such as a scale, key, compass rose, etc. Students then created their own maps following explicit directions and placing their buildings based on cardinal directions. To complete the unit, the students used Google Maps on their iPads to look up Wamego and key places in their town. The students had a great time with their partners looking at the

shape of our City Park Pond, the words written on the end of our football field end zones, and the name of the river that is south of Wamego, just to name a few landmarks they found on Google Maps.



- **Fourth Grade Enjoys Celebrating Homecoming!**

Our Fourth Grade classes thoroughly enjoyed the return of the Homecoming parade! It was fun to get out of the classroom for a little while, walk downtown, and show our school and community spirit by attending the parade.



- **Fourth Grade Studies Westward Trails in Social Studies**

Fourth Graders kicked off the Westward Trails unit with edible covered wagons. We will learn about the significance of the Oregon Trail, Santa Fe Trail, and the Pony Express and how they changed the Kansas landscape and population.

Fourth Graders will be traveling to Alcove Springs south of Marysville on October 6 to learn more about how the Oregon Trail impacted the development of the U.S. regions.





- Fifth Grade Study Ecosystems in Science**

Fifth Grade students have been learning about ecosystems and the role that decomposers play. As an experiment, students worked in groups to create a Ziploc "mold terrarium" in which we put bread, fruit, and cheese with one other substance (i.e. salt, baking soda, vinegar) to test and see if that substance prevented or enhanced mold growth. We ended up with quite a "zoo" of different species of mold, judging by the various colors and textures!



- Fifth Graders Investigate Preamble for Celebrate Freedom Week/Constitution Day**

Fifth Grade also celebrated Celebrate Freedom Week with a closer look at the Preamble to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We discussed the ideals in the Preamble and looked at the protections given to individuals in the Bill of Rights. The kids' book "A More Perfect Union" gives a great history of the Constitutional Convention and the compromises that went into drafting it.

- News from West Specialized Staff for September 2023**

**Art News:**

The art students at West Elementary have been busy working on their Optical Illusions for the cover of their sketchbooks. After determining which optical illusion the student wanted to use for the cover of their art folder, they drew in the illusion and traced over the pencil lines with Sharpie markers. From there, as a class, we viewed a variety of illusions that incorporated the use of color, movement, and hidden images to show what is possible with the use of color and strategic placement of colors on optical illusions. We have just finished working with testing out the color palette that is available with the markers that we have available in the art room. The students are now working on planning their

specific designs with the marker colors that are available. Once their plan is in place, the students will begin adding color.

### **Counselor News:**

During September, students at West Elementary learned more about Growth Mindset and Goal Setting during our class time together.

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.

Fourth Grade spent their time learning about goal setting by making a class goal and working toward reaching that goal. While Fifth Graders focused on setting and reaching personal goals.

This school year, we will be working on the skill of self-efficacy (believing you can do hard things) during classroom lessons. This month, Fourth and Fifth Grade students completed a self-efficacy pre-survey. The survey results will be used to guide students as they make goals for increasing self-efficacy. A grade level snapshot of the survey is provided to help guide instruction during Counselor classes.

Finally, during our time together, the students logged into Xello and began completing missions. We will continue exploring Xello and learning about the 21st century skills they'll need to succeed as they complete missions. The missions students will be working 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

### **Explore News:**

In Explore, we have been focusing on team building, problem solving, and being respectful in groups. We began our first STEAM challenge-paper towers. Students spent time in groups discussing their ideas and forming a group plan for their towers. The next class period they continued to work on "teamwork" and were able to complete their paper tower builds. It was exciting to see students work together and their creativity.

### **Library News:**

September is Deaf Awareness Month. With support from Stephanie Frost, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Greenbush Service Center, our students have enjoyed ASL story time and have been learning American Sign Language (ASL). Through these experiences, students are given the opportunity

to demonstrate empathy and equity in knowledge building within the global learning community by seeking interactions with a range of learners.

This month, we also recognized International **Dot Day** in the library, inspired by Peter Reynold's book *The Dot*. In class, students celebrated their creativity by creating a dot for our collaborative mural that is now on display in the specials' hallway. We also awarded Dot Day Awards to people in our community who encourage us!



#### **Music News:**

Lot's of music making fun is going on in the music classroom!

The following are activities the students have participated in.

- Treble Clef Note Identification using [Musictheory.net](https://www.musictheory.net) – Grades 3-5
- Star Spangled Banner – Grades 3-5
- Vocal Warm-ups, shaping vowels, and improving their tone – Grade 5
- Michael Finnigin – Grade 5
- Sing to Me – Grade 5
- Get Down in 2 parts – Grade 4
- Peas Porridge Hot (singing)- Grade 4
- Peas Porridge Hot (composition and performance) – Grade 3
- Shake the Papaya Down (movement activity) – Grade 4
- Apple Tree (steady beat and audiation activity) – Grade 3
- A Rig A Jig Jig (singing, movement and hand clap game) – Grade 3
- The Golden Rule (adding a B Section) – Grade 3
- Fan and Pick reviewing Treble Clef Note Identification – Grade 3-4
- Caught in a Spiderweb game reviewing Treble Clef Note Identification – Grade 3-4
- La Raspa Dance – Grade 3-4
- Los Mochetes Dance – Grade 4

We are preparing to start playing our recorders. If you still have not sent your child's recorder to school, please do so. If you would like to buy one, they can be purchased for \$6. You can send payments to the West Elementary office or call and make a payment over the phone.



### **P.E. News:**

During the month of September, the PE program at West participated in a Throwing Unit and a Football Unit. We always start with a very basic unit of throwing and catching to re-emphasize all the basic throwing fundamentals we want all West students to leave our school with. We then moved on to our football unit. We started with basic fundamentals and then moved on to small scenario activities where students got exposed to a variety of football concepts. The hope is now that the students will have more enjoyment playing football or watching the Red Raiders, Wildcats, or Chiefs this fall!

### **Technology News:**

This month in Technology, Third Grade students continued to work on components of passwords, privacy, and building strong passwords. Fourth and Fifth Grade Technology students worked to refresh keyboard skills and began to set typing goals for the year. We also began lessons on digital safety and how to avoid clickbait.