

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

Enrollment:

Third Grade: 123 – 1 new student this past month and lost 2 students – 1 student is being homeschooled and the other moved/relocated due to parent's work.

Fourth Grade – 104

Fifth Grade – 128 – Lost one student this month – Was out of district and switched to home district, due to transportation needs.

Total – 355

West Elementary Volunteer Program

Our West Elementary Volunteer Program continues to thrive and grow! We have added three additional volunteers to our team! We welcome Stacey Williams, Ann Myers, and Tyra Chrest to our volunteer team at West.

FastBridge Longitudinal Data for West Elementary

Our amazing Reading Specialist and Title I Teacher, Abby Ross, has put together longitudinal data for our students at West from FastBridge to see how students are progressing from year to year in reading and math. We will be looking at this data further at our December 6 faculty meeting. I have attached it here for your review: [FastBridge Longitudinal Data Review for West Elementary 23 24](#)

BSEL Work with TASN – Kansas MTSS Alignment

As we continue to work with TASN and the Kansas MTSS Alignment Team to ensure that we are solid in our core instruction for literacy, math, and behavior, as well as our intervention/enrichment systems for these areas, we have been focusing intentionally this year on Behavior and Social Emotional Learning. With this work, we have made this the focus of our BLT work, along with adding some additional members to the BSEL Team for West. We welcome Penny Graber, Kaycee Bieberle, and Alyssa Smith to our team.

We are working intentionally on specific relationship building strategies in our building to support our work in BSEL. Specifically, we are addressing the following strategies at the December 6 faculty meeting:

Relationship Strategies - Goal(s) for Building - BSEL Team (Jenn, Emily, Stacey, Penny, Kaycee, Alyssa)

- Relationship Mapping - For Staff and Students - Amy/Robin
- Welcoming Rituals/Morning Meetings - Emily/Jenn
- Optimistic Closures - Stacey/Penny
- We strongly encourage ALL staff to start implementing the 2x10 with students who are struggling with behaviors and/or connections to school! The 2x10 strategy includes meeting with a struggling student a minimum of 2 minutes per day for 10 school days in a row with the focus on anything the student wants to discuss to build a positive connection/relationship between the student and staff member/adult.

Find out more about what we are doing in our building with BSEL and Chronic Absenteeism by accessing the link here to our December 6 faculty meeting agenda: [12.6.23 Faculty Agenda](#).

I am working to continue to educate our students and families on the importance of regular attendance. We are focusing on this topic at our next faculty meeting. I have been sending regular communication to parents about the importance of good attendance. We are also having regular attendance meetings to look at student attendance data on a weekly basis and accessing resources such as Youth Services to assist families who are struggling in this area. Longitudinal data for chronic absenteeism at West is in the faculty agenda link above.

West Elementary Items for the Good – November 1, 2023

□ MTSS Intervention Team Updates

Classwide Fluency - After our multiyear work with the ELA TASN team, the Building Leadership Team at West Elementary took a deeper look at how to implement best reading practices as quickly as possible to start the school year. Our staff agreed to implement a classwide fluency intervention for all three grade levels during the first few weeks of school. Our Title I team created a procedure and schedule for this routine. After formally presenting to the staff last year, teachers implemented this procedure with fidelity during the daily scheduled intervention time. Students learned the routine, which will be used frequently in small reading groups, CKLA (ELA curriculum), science, social studies, and math. This fluency routine helped our students ease into the school year and prepared students to perform their best on all oral reading fluency assessments after a long summer break! After several weeks of this instructional routine, our students will be moved to small reading groups based on their fall benchmark screening reading data. These groups can include decoding interventions, fluency support, novel studies, and enrichment reading activities.

Professional Development - The West MTSS Crew has been busy with individualized professional development since the beginning of the year.

One of our Special Education Teachers, Sara McCarter, is part of the Autism Intervention Team and participated with multiple teachers in the Cooperative learning more ways to administer educational assessments. The team will meet other times during the year to continue working on helping students.



Our Speech Language Pathologist, Erin Moody, had the opportunity to attend the annual KSHA conference in Overland Park with the Cooperative's SLPs. Several content areas were educational, but the highlight was snapping a picture with the famous Jennie Bjorem shown above!



Our Reading Specialist, Abby Ross, was recently invited by the TASN team to attend a Collaboration Zoom meeting with Dr. Ben Proctor, the KSDE Deputy Commissioner. This meeting was specific to the KESA process and the four fundamentals for teaching and learning that KSDE is prioritizing in the area of reading. The four reading fundamentals include structured literacy, balanced assessment systems, standards alignment, and high-quality instruction. The focus of this meeting was to gain feedback and perspective from administrators and teachers.

□ **CES/WES Site Council Meeting Minutes from September 26, 2023; Next Meeting November 28, 2023**

We had a great showing at our first Site Council meeting of the school year for Central and West. We appreciate everyone who took time to join us and we welcome any additional members for our next meeting, which will be on Tuesday, November 28 at 7:00pm in the West Library.

We completed the following at our meeting:

- We discussed goals for KESA (Kansas Accreditation System) Cycle 2 and how our Year 1 of Cycle 2 visit went with the OVT (Outside Visitation Team).
- We provided input on what has changed, what is new, and the direction for the district.
- We gave updates on our DLT (District Leadership Team) and discussion on the district's "North Star". Site Council members agreed that it sounds like more work is needed in this area to ensure teacher/staff buy-in and understanding.
- We shared results from the KAP Assessments (ELA, Math, Science), as well as FastBridge Spring 2023 Data and Fall 2023 data.
- We had discussion about the implementation of new core math, continuation of strong core literacy curriculum implementation, and focus on BSEL (Behavior/Social and Emotional Learning) work throughout the district, including the district's effort to reduce chronic absenteeism (missing 10% of school days more more).
- Teacher reps will present more information on our new core math curriculum for K-5, Eureka Math Squared, at the next Site Council meeting, November 28, 2023 at 7:00pm.
- Please reach out to Mrs. Flinn at West or Mrs. Dow at Central with any questions regarding Site Council!



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

We will be honoring and celebrating local veterans at our annual Veterans Day Reception at West Elementary on Friday, November 10 from 8:15-8:45am. We will be providing cookies from our Food Service Department, as well as muffins donated by Renee Lucas with Oz Tasty Treats. We will also be providing fresh, hot coffee! Thank you to our Student Council members for their assistance in decorating our library in a patriotic theme and writing letters of appreciation for our veterans. Thank you also to our StuCo sponsors, Haylee Haynes, Sara Greene, and Stacey Hirt for organizing this event! We have 28 veterans signed up to attend!

□ **Student Council Updates**

Students of the West Student Council focus on strengthening our building culture for both students and staff. This month they are creating a special meal for teachers to share on the evening of Parent/Teacher Conferences. Teachers will be served a lovely meal by the West PTO and have a family style meal with decorated table scapes. Students of the council have made custom placemats for each teacher and handmade vegetable can centerpieces to make our teachers feel valued and special.

West Student Council members are partnering with the USD 320 District Office to do weekly meal delivers for our local Meals on Wheels Program. The Student Council's mission is to provide students with school-wide and community-wide opportunities for service. Thanks to the district office for dedicating one day a week to this service project!

We had three amazing helpers deliver Meals on Wheels to local community members on Thursday, October 12! Thank you to Elijah, Carson, and Stella for taking time over their lunch period to assist Assistant Superintendent, Scott Meitler, and USD 320 Treasurer, Kay Markey, with delivering meals to our community members. Two of our goals for West students is to build leadership skills, as well as civic engagement. Opportunities such as this help develop these skills in our students.

Elijah, Carson, and Stella are pictured below following their deliveries.



We had a local non-profit organization, Be the Light, work with us to pack weekend snack bags. These snack bags will be distributed to local students who show a need for food security.



□ **WHS Students Assist West Elementary Teachers on “Service Day”**

We enjoyed seeing former students at West Elementary on Wednesday, October 4 for "WHS Service Day"! Mrs. Beth Aldridge, WHS Language Arts Teacher, accompanied the WHS students to our building where they spent time helping in the library, putting up fall decorations, assisting in classrooms, and helping in P.E. We had 15 volunteers with us from 9:30 to 10:40am. Great job, WHS Raiders!



□ **Congratulations to Fourth Grade Teacher, Sara Greene, and WHS Language Arts Teacher, Beth Aldridge: USD 320 Teachers of the Year for 2025!**

Please join me in congratulating Sara Greene, West Fourth Grade Teacher, and Beth Aldridge, WHS Language Arts Teacher, for being selected as the Wamego USD 320 Teachers of the Year! These amazing teachers will represent our district in the Kansas Teacher of the Year Program for 2025. The next step is for them to complete the Kansas Teacher of the Year application process, where they will be reviewed by a committee at the state level. In Kansas, nominees for the KTOY Program can be awarded as district winners, regional semi-finalists, regional finalists, and Kansas Teacher of the Year. We wish them both the best of luck in this next level of competition!

We also want to recognize the other excellent teachers that were nominated for this award – Congratulations to Fourth Grade Teacher – Amanda Beason, Kindergarten Teacher – Jessi Butts, Kindergarten Teacher – Jamee Schwartz, WMS Math Teacher – Brittany Lakin, and WMS Language Arts Teacher – Adrienne Walsh.

We are grateful that our district continues to participate in the Kansas Teacher of the Year Program to allow teachers this opportunity to be recognized for their work and achievements! Mrs. Greene and Mrs. Aldridge will automatically become part of “KEEN”, the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network, and receive multiple professional development opportunities as members of this prestigious educator organization.

I have attached a few pictures from our “surprise” announcement in Mrs. Greene’s classroom to let her know she had been selected as the USD 320 Elementary Teacher of the Year. It was so much fun to see the excitement on her students’ faces, as well as the expressions of joy on Mrs. Greene’s face, and her husband’s and young son’s faces!

Congratulations again to Mrs. Greene and Mrs. Aldridge!



□ **Third Grade News**

Halloween Fun! Third Grade had fun celebrating Halloween with a great party. They enjoyed seeing each other all dressed up!



CKLA Unit “The Ancient Roman Civilization”

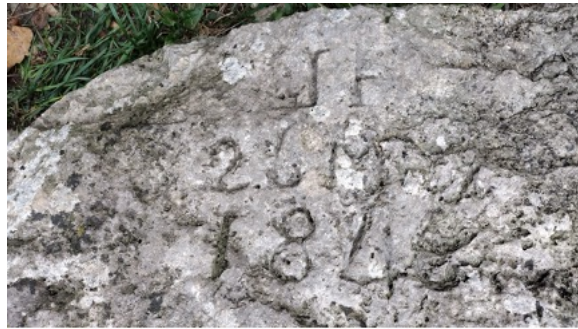
Students are entering their fourth unit in CKLA. Students are very excited to be introduced to Roman artifacts to learn more about their way of ancient life. Students are learning about the rise and fall of the empire, along with their structure of government, military, food resources, language, and architecture. Third Grade teachers dressed up on Halloween in Roman-style costumes!



- **Vienna Moody Wins 2nd Place in MLB Pitch, Hit, & Run Championship during 2023 World Series!**
We are so very proud of West Elementary student, Vienna Moody, for winning the KC Royals Pitch, Hit, & Run championship back in September, which advanced her to the national platform at the World Series between the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Texas Rangers. **Vienna competed today, October 29, 2023 for the 8U Division of the MLB Pitch, Hit, & Run Finals at the 2023 World Series!** She was so close to winning it all, but came in 2nd place. Vienna is strong, fierce, and determined, with the sweetest personality you could ever imagine! Your Red Raider family is SO proud of you, Vienna! Congratulations on this amazing accomplishment! Vienna is the daughter of Matt and Erin Moody of Wamego.

- **Fourth Grade News**
Alcove Spring Field Trip

On October 6, Fourth Grade students visited Alcove Spring, an important landmark on the Oregon Trail. They got to experience what it was like for settlers to hike the Kansas prairie and visit the beautiful spring. Members of the Alcove Spring Preservation Association taught the students about the unique history of this site, as well as the origin of the name. Students were also able to view the names of settlers etched in the rock, as well as walk in the wagon ruts left behind by the hundreds of thousands of people that stopped to camp at Alcove Spring on their way to Oregon.



“JF Reed 26 May 1846“(member of the ill-fated Reed-Donner Party who contributed in naming Alcove Spring)

Pony Express Relay Race

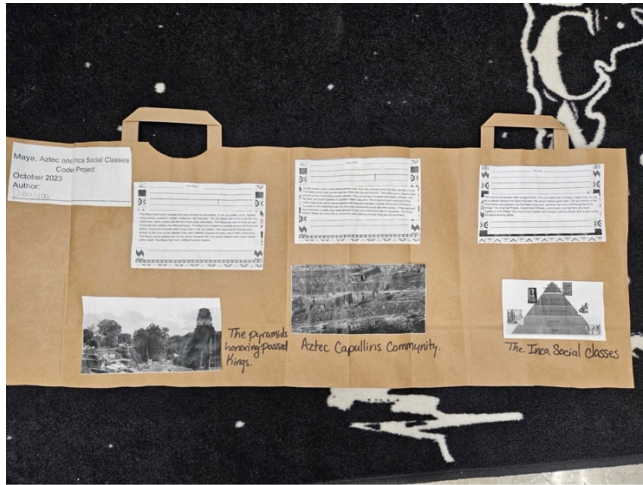
In social studies, Fourth Grade students were able to put their knowledge to action in an exciting simulation of the Pony Express trail. Students took the Pony Express oath and became “official” riders complete with a hat, bandana, and “mochila” full of mail. Students competed in teams to race from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. Along the way, they had to stop at a relay station to trade horses and continue along the trail.



Fifth Grade News

Fifth Grade Students Learn about Maya, Aztec, and Inca Civilizations through CKLA

Fifth Grade students studied the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations during the second unit of CKLA. A culminating project was to create a Codex. Students could choose from the topics of architecture or farming methods for their codex. Students read information from their Unit 2 reader and Unit 2 activity book over each civilization and worked on paraphrasing what they learned about their topic. Students then wrote explanatory paragraphs about each civilization over their topic. The paragraphs had to have topic sentences, details, comparisons, contrasts, and conclusions. Completed paragraphs were glued onto paper and students then created pictures that represented each civilization.



Fall Poster Activity with Math

Fifth Grade students practiced their linear measurement skills by creating a fall-themed poster. Students were given specified measurements to create boxes of specified dimensions. Students used rulers to create the boxes to the nearest one-fourth inch. Some of the boxes that the students had to create were to the nearest centimeter.

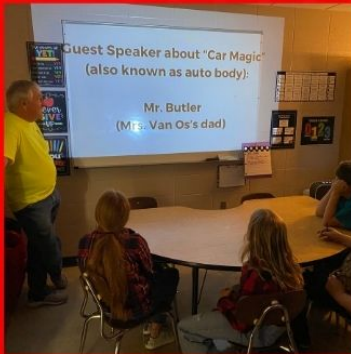


West Student, Emma Douglass, Donates Playground Equipment to School!

Thank you to West student, Emma Douglass, for asking for donations for her birthday to donate back to our school! Emma asked her guests if they would donate various types of playground equipment to use at West Elementary School. The response was excellent, and Emma is shown here with a box and bag full of new equipment that she is donating to our school for students to use at recess. Emma also collected items for the local emergency shelter. We are so proud of Emma for demonstrating such a caring, giving, selfless attitude. Thank you for being an amazing role model for others, Emma!



□ **Special Guest Speaker for Fifth Grade Reading Groups – George Butler**



Reading Group: Guest Speaker: George Butler

On Wednesday, October 4, Mrs. Van Os's fifth grade reading groups had a special guest speaker: Mrs. Van Os's dad! The students were reading the book *The Unteachables* by Gordon Korman. In this story, a group of students decide to use their teachers old car as their science project by giving the car a total makeover, inside and out! Mrs. Van Os's dad talked to the class about auto body, which was one of his first jobs but is now his hobby. He brought special tools he uses: a dolly and hammer for dent repair, a sander to remove paint, and a paint sprayer. The kids thought the before and after pictures of some of his cars and even a motorcycle were very cool. They learned it takes a lot of time, work, and even creativity to makeover a vehicle.



□ **Scholastic Book Fair Success at West Elementary!**

Thank you to everyone who purchased books and other items from our Scholastic Book Fair this fall. This was our most successful Book Fair yet! We will receive \$3,960.51 in Scholastic Rewards, which will help us purchase more books for the West Elementary library for all to enjoy! Mrs. Hatfield will also use some of these funds to buy some new sets for our reading groups that meet during enrichment/intervention time. Thank you to Mrs. Hatfield and Mrs. Lattimer for all of their work on providing and organizing the Book Fair this fall!

□ **West Elementary Teachers Hard at Work in PLC Teaming Meetings**

Each Wednesday, our grade level PLC Teams meet in their collaborative teams to plan instruction, review student work, create common assessments, and deepen their understanding of the curriculum and standards. In addition to these teaming opportunities, they put in hours and hours beyond the regular school day to plan and prepare for student learning. I wish the general public could hear the level of conversation that takes place in our PLC Team meetings. It is truly impressive!

In the pictures below, our Fifth Grade PLC Team is deep in discussion about adding and subtracting fractions with related units by using areas models to rename fractions. This planning requires understanding of mathematics at a deep conceptual level, which will translate to traditional algorithms as students progress in the curriculum. The teachers are practicing together, asking questions, and studying their content.

Anyone who thinks teaching isn't hard work should come visit us sometime. I'm so proud of our staff. These types of conversations and work take place daily across grade levels and buildings. All grade level teams meet for a protected amount of common time on Wednesdays at West to team.



□ **Teachers from Royal Valley Visit Central and West Elementary Schools**

We recently had a group of teachers visit Central and West to learn more about our literacy practices, specifically the implementation of CKLA. Their Reading Specialist sent this lovely thank you to Mr. Meitler following their visit:

"I'm sorry this is a bit delayed, but I wanted to send a heartfelt thank you to you and your staff for allowing us to come and visit for two days last week. We enjoyed the day, and your staff at both schools were more than accommodating. We appreciate all the candid discussions, as well as some of the areas that you have fine-tuned or figured out. It was an extremely beneficial day for us, as we

continue to search out the best curriculum for our district! We know it can throw your usual routines off to have visitors, so we are grateful you allowed us to come.

Please thank both of your buildings for their hospitality. You have incredible leadership in both your administration and teachers. It was impressive to see how everyone supports each other and works together in each of your buildings. No doubt, that is why your data is on a positive and upward trajectory."

□ **West Students and Staff Participate in the Mountain Plains Crunch Off Event**

What is the Mountain Plains Crunch Off?

In celebration of Farm to School Month, States throughout the Mountain Plains Region (CO, MT, MO, KS, NE, ND, SD, WY) competed to see which state can get the most "crunches" into a local apple, or other locally-grown produce, per capita. As Crunch Off participants, West students and staff joined other students, teachers, farmers, parents, community members, and local food enthusiasts in celebrating the wonderful produce the Mountain Plains Region has to offer. We hope that our "Crunch" efforts will encourage healthy eating and support local agriculture, while celebrating Farm to School Month and shedding light on the wonderful efforts of our school food service partners.

Wamego USD 320 Food Services procured local apples from Peters Orchards, located just east of Kansas City, for our event! We have the BEST Food Service department in the state and country!

Our students and staff enjoyed participating in the "Crunch Off" with some delicious apples! The apples were rated as Grade 2, which means some of them may have been misshapen or had some imperfections. We want students to understand that these are still perfectly good fruits to eat and to avoid the waste that happens if the fruit doesn't look "perfect" in the grocery store!

Here are some pics of our Crunch Off event from Thursday, October 26.



□ **News from West Specialized Staff for October 2023**

Art News:

As we finish the month of October, the students at West are in the process of wrapping up their art folder covers. The students did an excellent job with the planning and coloring phases of the project that took multiple weeks with our once a week 35-minute art time. Some students opted for a variety of color variations on their covers to attract attention. Other students used combinations of their favorite colors to fill in the various parts of the folder with less contrast among colors.

This project allowed the students an opportunity to be exposed to several different types of markers from Sharpies to Marks-a-lot to a variety of Crayola Markers. The students realized that there were positives and negatives associated with all markers and they overcame several obstacles while completing their project.

You will see your child's art folder cover when they bring their folder home in May. It is the only art project that will stay at school until the end of the year. As we complete projects throughout the year, art projects will come home.



Counselor News:

In October during counseling classes, our lessons were about bullying and how to Recognize, Report and Refuse bullying. We learned that bullying is a repeated, intentional act that is meant to hurt another person mentally, physically, or socially. Students have had lots of opportunities to practice these skills during role playing in the classroom and partner work. They also learned that as a bystander, you have power and responsibility to support the person being bullied.

In addition, Fourth and Fifth Grade learned about cyberbullying. They learned how to respond in a respectful way to support the person who is being bullied. They then identified ways to get help when they have witnessed suspected cyberbullying. Finally, they learned to “Think Before You Post” anytime you are wanting to post anything on the internet, send an email, or text message.

Explore News:

In Explore class, we learned about World Space Week and the Artemis mission. We also learned about the partial solar eclipse and how/where to view it. Following the eclipse, we began exploring germs and bacteria. Students used GloGerm Lotion to see how germs transfer from our hands to surfaces. We learned proper hand washing techniques. Next, we'll be doing an experiment on bacteria, swabbing surfaces to see where it can be found and grown in petri dishes!

Library News:

There is nothing like reading a thrilling story, one that grips you so tightly and puts your senses on alert simply through the power of words. This month in library classes, students have been working on their entries for the Young Writer's Spooky Sagas creative writing contest.

We also had a very successful Fall Book Fair! Thank you to all purchased books and other items from our Scholastic Book Fair this fall. This was our most successful Book Fair yet! We will receive \$3,960.51 in Scholastic Rewards, which will help us purchase more books for the West Elementary library for all

to enjoy! Additionally, some of these funds will be used to buy some new sets for our reading groups that meet during enrichment/intervention time.

Music News:

Much singing has taken place in the music classroom in October. Both Fifth and Fourth Grade have begun rehearsing their concert music. Fifth Grade will perform “Broadway Beat” on January 25, 2024 and Fourth Grade will perform “Let’s Eat” on January 29, 2023. Both shows are a lot of fun and should prove entertaining to all. Third Grade has been moving and grooving to some new tunes. They have learned the dances “Kinderpolka”, “La Raspa”, “Chimes of Dunkirk” and “Alabama Gal”. They also have been creating rhythm patterns and performing them for the class. They have read the books Shake Dem Halloween Bones and Hershell and the Hanukkah Goblins. Music connections were made in both books. Fourth Grade read the books Who Invited You? and The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything. Students were asked to sing a song or create movement for their chosen word. Fourth Grade also created and performed their “Candy Corn Compositions”. Students created rhythms using Halloween eraser manipulatives. New concepts learned by Fifth Grade students were time signatures in both simple and compound meter, sixteenth note/eighth note patterns, and dotted quarter note/eighth note patterns.

P.E. News:

During the month of October, we kicked off the month with the “West Elementary Fastest Class Challenge”. We do this once every semester and the class with the most laps in 5 minutes earns the right to keep the Fastest Class Trophy in their class for the semester. Congratulations to Ms. Hirt’s class, as her class won the trophy for the 3rd consecutive time!



Additionally, we are excited to welcome Mr. Brady Tharman to West Elementary. He will be student teaching with our students for the rest of the first semester. The kids are excited to have him with us and he is doing a great job!

Technology News:

All Technology classes began October with a discussion on identifying harassment and/or bullying online through Interland. We discussed specific responses to bullying when you see it or experience it online. We will end October with a discussion about Kindness and create positive “Boo grams” to distribute to others. We also introduced students to Quiver, a 3D interactive coloring software.

In Technology this month Fourth and Fifth Grade worked on typing skills. We reinforced home row keys and two-hand typing skills. Third Grade began working on memorizing their usernames and passwords. They were introduced to parts of the computer and began using WordPad. Third Grade also worked on building mouse skills through the game Dragon Drop.