

**West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
November 6 and December 4, 2024**

Enrollment:

Third Grade: 125 One Withdrawal in November

Fourth Grade – 126 One Withdrawal in December

Fifth Grade – 100 – No change from October/November

Total - 350

West Elementary BOE Report from Mrs. Flinn:

I am sharing these as reminders of the items I presented to the BOE in November. The main area of focus was the Strategic Plan area of Student Success at West Elementary School:

- Positive Culture/Climate
 - Mrs. Flinn’s Morning Greetings
 - Student Recognition:
 - Monthly Second Step Assemblies
 - School “ABC” TV (Announcements/Attendance, Birthdays, Celebrations)
- High Impact Instruction
 - Opportunities to Respond
 - Basic 5 Observations
 - Walkthroughs

We will be expanding our work of completing Basic 5 Observations to all staff during the second semester of school. This semester, we focused on the BLT members completing these observations. We have completed 30 observations during the 2nd Quarter of the school year. During second semester, I will be providing release time for all instructional staff to get into other classrooms and collect this same data. We will be using this data to determine areas of growth and areas for continued improvement. As a reminder, during these 15-minute observations, we spend the first 10 minutes recording the number of positive and corrective feedback interactions between the teacher and students. Also, during this time, we record the number of “Opportunities to Respond”, including those that are verbal, written, or nonverbal. The last 5-minute block is spent on recording data for “time on task” for each student. This data sheet is copied and the original given to the teacher. We then put this data together without student names and review it as a BLT and then as a faculty.

In addition to the work we are doing to increase positive to corrective feedback and increase the number of OTRs provided in class, we are also deliberately working on implementing Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures with fidelity. Molly Townsend, our West Elementary Kagan Coach, has already provided two opportunities this year for staff to be “coached” in the use of various Kagan Structures. Mrs. Townsend will also be bringing back the “Structure of the Month Club”, an after school professional development opportunity for staff to learn and apply different Kagan Structures in their classrooms and receive additional support in this model.

Items for the Good for West Elementary 11-6-2024

- **More “High Five Friday”**

We continue to host "High Five Friday" at West between 7:30-7:55am each week. If you know of a group and want to organize one of our dates, please reach out to Mrs. Flinn! We would love to have our BOE members join us one Friday this year! So far, the following groups have helped us with High Five Friday (or are scheduled to be there this month):

- Wamego PD and Fire Department
- WHS Football Team
- WHS Cheerleaders and Dazzlers
- WHS Cast of Shrek
- Pyro Crew
- Chik-Fa-La
- WHS Lady Raider Basketball Team



- **West Students and Staff Honor Veterans with Reception, Field of Flags, and Veteran Wall**

The West Student Council transformed the library into a patriotic display and created heartfelt, handwritten letters to welcome and express gratitude to our veterans for their service on Friday, November 8, 2024. Over 40 veterans were in attendance, and students who had a special veteran present were invited to join their guests in the library for coffee cake, coffee, and milk.

A special thank you goes to our incredible Food Service Staff and Director, Laura Fails, for providing the delicious coffee cake and refreshments. We are also grateful to Jim and Laura Hovind for generously donating the wonderful Paramour Coffee.

The ceremony began with students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, a daily tradition at West Elementary. Following the Pledge, four brave Fifth Grade students—Addilyn Delay, Ellie Massie, Bri Ridder, and Ruger Stratton—sang a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, under the direction of Music Teacher Marcia Hermes. Their performance was moving and memorable.

Principal Amy Flinn then addressed the veterans, welcoming them and highlighting the ways in which our school fosters patriotism. She shared information about Celebrate Freedom Week and Constitution Day, which are observed each September, and emphasized the importance of understanding our nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Principal Flinn also spoke about how our school honors Patriot Day each year, remembering the tragic

events of September 11, 2001, and reflecting on the significance of that day in American history. She concluded her remarks by expressing deep appreciation to the veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices.

Veterans were warmly greeted by the Wamego High School Cheerleaders and invited to view the new "Field of Flags" display. This visual tribute featured American flags purchased by students in honor of their special veterans. Each flag displayed a personalized tag honoring a specific veteran, along with the student or family who sponsored it. We are grateful to Midwest Concrete Materials, Kaw Valley State Bank, BBN Architects, and BHS Construction for underwriting the cost of the flags. Their support, along with the continued generosity of the Wamego/Manhattan business community, makes this project possible. We look forward to expanding the Field of Flags each year. Additionally, we thank Yard deSIGNS of Manhattan for creating a stunning sign to honor all branches of the military.

We would also like to express our appreciation to StuCo Sponsors Haylee Haynes, Sara Greene, and Stacey Hirt, along with all the Student Council representatives, for their hard work in preparing for the event.

Most importantly, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to all the veterans who attended the reception and to all veterans for their service and sacrifice. We honor and respect you.





- **Third Graders Explore Engineering Concepts**

In our Third Grade classrooms, students had a great time building backbones using materials like Q-tips, toothpicks, string, pipe cleaners, and popsicle sticks! This hands-on project helped students see how backbones in animals are similar to bridges. Working together, students experimented with different materials to find the best ways to make their backbones sturdy.



- ***Third Grade Enjoys Halloween Fun with WHS Marching Band***

On Halloween morning, our school was filled with excitement as the high school band came to perform for us. Dressed in festive costumes, the band members brought a lively spirit to the day, playing a mix of fun, spooky tunes that got everyone into the Halloween mood.



- ***Third Graders Explore Wamego Downtown in Walking Field Trip***

Our Third Grade classes recently enjoyed an exciting walking field trip around Wamego, where we had the opportunity to explore Wamego's history. Students set off on foot to discover the stories behind local landmarks from the first hospital to the Dutch Mill, and everything else in between.



- **Third Grade CKLA Unit 4 - Opinion Writing**

To wrap up CKLA Unit 4, *Ancient Roman Civilization*, Third Grade students wrote an opinion writing piece. To prepare, students read text about architecture and its contribution to the Roman time-period. Students then collected their facts and developed their own opinions, drafted, revised, edited, and wrote a final copy. Students were graded on a rubric for their ideas, organization, and conventions. Students were able to state an opinion about a topic and were able to support their opinion with reasons from the text. Students were able to connect Rome's contribution to today's world in at least one example in their opinion writing piece. As a culminating activity to end their Ancient Roman Civilization unit, students created and designed a mosaic picture. In Rome, mosaic art was used to decorate mausoleums, churches, and other important buildings.



- **Third Graders Learn about Animals through Time in Science**

In Science, students have been learning about Animals through Time in our latest unit. In this unit, students develop an understanding of how animals and their environments change throughout time. Students were able to see how fossils provide a window into the animals and habitats of the past. Students also were able to analyze the traits of animals to see how these provide evidence for how those traits vary, how they are inherited, and how they have changed over time. Students also examined how the environment can affect inherited traits and determined which animals would survive in a particular environment. Third Grade students enjoyed lots of hands on activities during this unit!



- ***Fourth Graders Visit Alcove Spring and Pony Express Barn***

On their recent field trip to Alcove Spring and the Pony Express Barn & Museum in Marysville, KS, our Fourth Grade students embarked on an exciting journey through history. They explored the significance of the Oregon Trail, learning about the challenges faced by pioneers, while participating in hands-on activities that brought the past to life. Students admired the Alcove Spring itself and wagon ruts that have carved the land. At the Pony Express Barn, students discovered the vital role of the Pony Express in connecting the nation, engaging in interactive exhibits that highlighted the speed and bravery of its riders. This immersive experience not only deepened their understanding of American history, but also sparked their curiosity and appreciation for the pioneers who shaped the West.



- ***Fourth Graders Learn about Erosion from Andrew Klein and the Erosion Trailer***

To kick off their Erosion unit, Fourth Grade students participated in a hands-on experience with the erosion trailer, which vividly demonstrated the causes and effects of erosion. As they watched water flow over various surfaces, they eagerly observed how different materials interacted with the moving water, leading to the gradual wearing away of soil and rocks. Through engaging activities and experiments, the students learned about the impact of factors like wind and water on the landscape, gaining a deeper understanding of this important geological process. The interactive nature of the trailer not only made the concept of erosion come alive, but also fostered teamwork and critical thinking, as they discussed their observations and shared ideas.



- **Fourth Grade Thanksgiving Rotations**

Fourth Grade brought learning to life with an afternoon of Thanksgiving activities that combined creativity, history, and hands-on learning. Students were able to learn about the history and traditions of Thanksgiving by rotating through six different engaging experiences in our Fourth Grade classrooms. They explored the story of the Mayflower by creating a themed craft, which helped them connect with the pilgrims' journey. The classes learned what pilgrims might have eaten at the first Thanksgiving, contrasting it with modern-day traditions. They also taste-tested cranberries while learning about the unique methods of cranberry harvesting. Practicing gratitude was a central theme, as students made gratitude bracelets, reflecting on things they are thankful for. Adding a STEM twist, they participated in a flying turkey challenge, designing contraptions to make their "turkey" soar. Each activity offered a meaningful way to celebrate the season while fostering creativity and learning.



- ***Fourth Grade Explores Careers with Classroom to Career Program***

Through the Classroom to Careers program, local businesses have partnered with our Fourth Grade classrooms to inspire students by showcasing career opportunities within the community. Representatives from these businesses have visited our classrooms to engage students in interactive activities that highlight various careers and roles, making learning both educational and fun. Some classes have also had the opportunity to even go on field trips to visit their business partners' workplaces. These experiences provide students with a real-world perspective on potential careers, sparking curiosity and encouraging them to think about their future in an exciting way. We are so grateful to our business partners for choosing to participate in this wonderful program.



- ***Fifth Explores Ancient Civilizations in CKLA Unit 2***

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 bags, then created pictures that represented each civilization. The paper bags were donated by Gene's Heartland Foods grocery store.



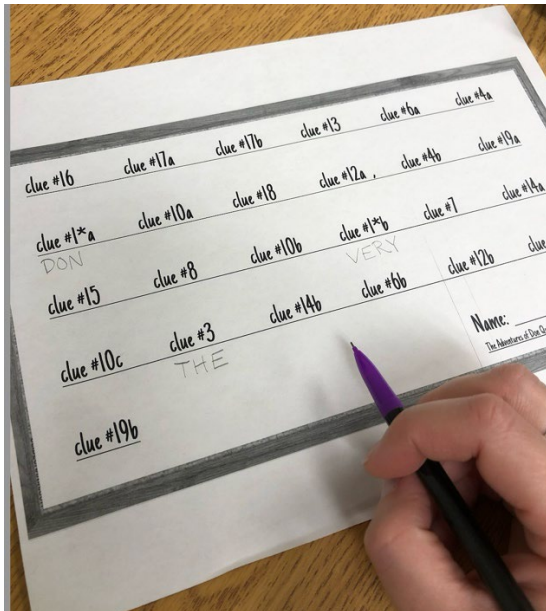
- **Fifth Grade Creates Fall Poster Activity in Math**

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 they created to the nearest centimeter.



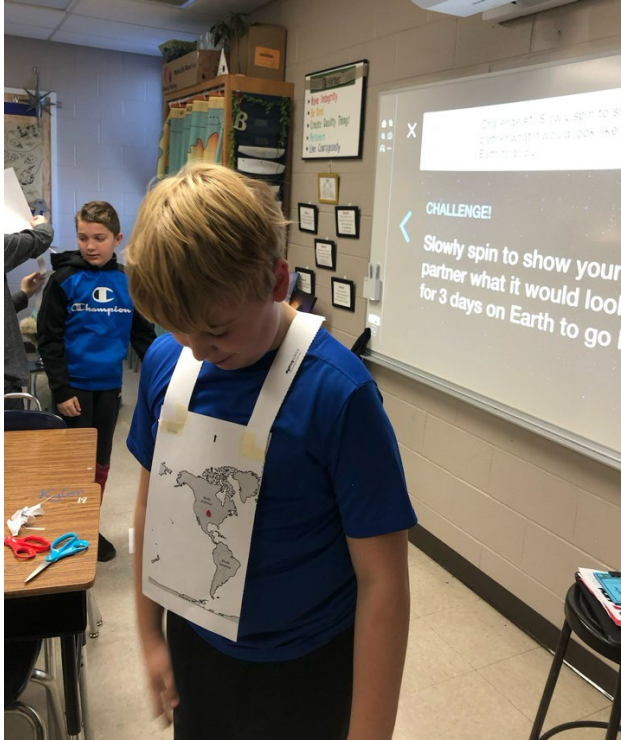
- **Fifth Grade Studies Don Quixote in CKLA Unit**

Fifth Grade students will be starting their next unit in CKLA over *The Adventures of Don Quixote* with an added treat this year. Custodian Randall Laughlin worked on creating a secret encoded message using words found within the text. For each chapter, students will be given three numbers that correspond to a page number, a line number, and the word's order in that line. As they collect all of these words, they will be arranged to form a message about one of the themes of the book that will be revealed at the end of the story. It was SO kind of Randall to come up with this idea and offer to put a code together for us to share with students!



- ***Fifth Graders Learn about Earth in Science***

Fifth Grade students are starting their unit called Spaceship: Earth in Science. They will explore the following concepts: find out more specifics about the rotation of the earth (both daily and yearly), investigate the angle of sunlight on the Earth during each day and season of the year (and how that affects the length of shadows), learn to recognize some of the more famous star constellations that are visible during each of the seasons, and discover the phases of the moon's lunar cycle.



- ***Fifth Grade STEM Club Takes Field Trip to KU***

This is our second year of STEM club! We do two six-week sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring. STEM club takes place in the technology room after school every Monday for six weeks. This session, we explored paper engineering by creating pop up cards. We also worked through the engineering design process by making paper airplanes, gathering data on how they flew, and creating variables to see if we could make them fly further.

We were honored to have Kansas School for the Blind visit us with their Maker Van. They brought a codable drone, cubelet robots, and a braille that the students could use to type their name in braille! Students had the opportunity to wear goggles that simulated vision impairment and practiced walking with a white cane.

Our grand finale was a field trip to the KU campus to visit the aerospace engineering department. While there, we visited the natural history museum, did a walking tour, visited aerospace design labs, and created straw rockets to shoot down drones that we flew! We cap enrollment at twenty and had a full group this session! We are hoping that the excitement surrounding the field trip will encourage another full session in the spring!



- **Congratulations to West Student, Alex Cheeseman, for Earning Top "Pre-Pro" Dance Scholarship!**
We are so proud of West student, Alex Cheeseman, for recently winning a \$200 scholarship towards participation at the TOP (Talent on Parade) Pre-Pro Pre-Teen Workshop that will be held in Branson this summer! Alex has been dancing since she was 2 years old and is shining in this skill set. She is a member of the Madhouse Dance Company out of Topeka, KS. Alex recently completed Level 1 Dance and has moved into Level 2. We are so proud of you, Alex! Keep on dancing and soaring to excellence!



- **West Student, Anika Warner, Attends Leadership Conference in Arkansas**
West Elementary student, Anika Warner, recently attended the GTMA Leadership Camp in Little Rock, Arkansas. She was part of the Council members (Senate members were high schoolers).

Anika shared that the Little Rock Nine museum was amazing and that she learned a lot about how those courageous young persons stood strong against impossible to comprehend adversity.

GTMA (Global Traditional Martial Arts) Leadership Camp, "Leaders Change the World", was a highly impactful experience for Anika. In addition to training in GSHIM taekwondo anti-bullying techniques, participants toured the Central High School National Historic Site, learned about the Little Rock Nine, toured the State Capital building, practiced public speaking, and had a great deal of fun expanding their leadership potential off the mats.

We are so proud of Anika for her work in martial arts, as well as for attending this fantastic learning opportunity to strengthen her leadership skills. Way to go, Anika!



- **Student Council Supports "Be the Light" Project**

StuCo was busy in November packing snack bags for students in the Wamego community. We would like to thank our partner, Be the Light, for providing this outreach for our students! We were able to pack over two weeks' worth of snack bags. Students helping students is one of our greatest missions of the West Elementary Student Council!



- **1st Annual West Elementary Family Thanksgiving Meal**

We had 107 additional guests join us for our 1st Annual Thanksgiving Dinner at West Elementary! Thank you so much to our amazing USD 320 Food Service Staff and Director, Laura Fails, for making this happen. Also, a special thank you goes out to our incredible Office Staff - Courtney Gann, Sarah Bloom, and Michaela Bellinder, for their part in organizing the event, and to Mary Kay and Bob Elder for volunteering to take money as our guests arrived. These individuals helped the process go so smoothly! Thank you also to our day custodian, John Hostettler for his part in setting up.

The meal was delicious, and the memories made priceless. Thank you to all who joined us for this special meal with our students!



- **West Elementary MTSS Team News**

The Special Service's Cooperative has four speech-language pathologists and two assistants, who recently gathered at the annual Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (KSHA) conference in Wichita, a key event for professionals in the field. Each of them brought unique perspectives from various educational settings, eager to expand their knowledge and skills. The conference offered workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities, allowing them to explore the latest research, innovative therapeutic techniques, and advancements in technology. Our SLPs not only deepened their expertise, but also built meaningful connections with colleagues, fostering collaboration that will enrich their practice and enhance the support they provide to our students with communication disorders. Also, this annual conference supplies their unique continuing education hours needed to maintain their state and national licensures.

Over the past few months, West Special Education Teacher, Mrs. McCarter, has participated in a book study on *Differentiated Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact* that was offered by the KSDE Early Literacy/Dyslexia Team. This book study met weekly and covered the chapters of Wiley Blevins book in which those that met discussed the information provided in the book so we could scaffold whole-group instruction for all students to access grade-level content. There was wonderful discussion with many teachers across the state of Kansas discussing ways we teach phonics and ways we can help improve our phonics instruction and differentiate to help all students receive the best phonics at the highest level possible. This book study provided great strategies for me to find ways to help differentiate instruction with my students.

- **West PTO Updates**

- Discussed High Five Friday and how to assign filling the rest of the dates for the year. Created a plan for this. This has been a great way to end each week!
- We earned roughly \$10,000 from Trash Bag sales this year. Best year yet! We will continue with Trash Bag Sales in 2025-2026.
- Will recognize American Education Week **November 18-21**. PTO will provide a veggie/fruit tray and cooler of drinks for all staff. Mrs. Flinn and StuCo reps will also bring around the Treat Trolley next week.
- Deck the Halls will be **Friday, November 22** at 4:00pm. Reba Koster is heading this up. Any staff that want to stick around and help decorate the building for Christmas are invited to do so!
- PTO is in the early stages of planning for the End of Year Assessment Celebration. Kayla Stansbury will reserve the inflatables with Ultimate Bounce and Kandy Williams will reserve Scarecrow SnoCones.

- We discussed having an “Angel Tree” next year for students/families in need at Christmas time. This would take a lot of thought and planning, so it is tabled until next year, but we may begin planning for it during this school year.
- West PTO will be adopting a family or families for the Wamego Christmas Bureau this year. We will be sending out a Sign-up Genius for all families and/or staff to participate as they can.
- **Site Council Updates**
 - The next Site Council meeting will be **Tuesday, December 3** at 6:00pm.
 - Mr. Meitler will be presenting about the possibility of providing a preschool/childcare for USD 320 staff.
 - Mr. Neel and Mrs. Flinn will be giving a review of school goals as they relate to the USD 320 Strategic Plan.

- **Specialized Team News for October 2024 and November 2024**

Art News from Mrs. Havice:

“Mistakes will happen, it will all be okay!” is the motto for our next project in art at West Elementary. We are trying to focus on understanding when mistakes are made, we can find ways to deal with the adversity. Some ways to address mistakes are turning over the paper and starting again, making slight adjustments with sizing to make the mistake appear to be part of the design, changing the direction of our paper, or finding items that can be used to cover the entire mistake or a portion of the mistake such as a flower or flowers, a leaf or leaves, a stem, vase, or tablecloth – that will be included in our project already. However, with a positive attitude and not announcing to our classmates that we made a mistake, we will be able to handle the adversity without getting upset at ourselves.

We are working on a project based on artist Yayoi Kusama. Kusama is known for her work featuring polka dotted pumpkins. However, she has also worked with infinity nets and flowers too. I chose to have the students create a collage piece of art that involves drawing with materials that cannot be altered once they are used – especially when it comes to crayons and markers. The good news is that infinity nets are not supposed to be perfect, and they are to appear to have the hand-drawn look.

Be sure to check back next month to see how our projects are progressing as we incorporate cutting and pasting into the mix of skills with this project.

During November, we continued working on our artwork inspired by Yayoi Kusama. After finishing our background design featuring infinity nets, the students worked on using a staggered pattern to create a tablecloth design by drawing with broadline bold colored markers on gray construction paper. Then the students began working on creating a flower vase design that incorporates something the artist Yayoi Kusama used in her artwork in the form of dots, lines, eye shapes, infinity nets, or a combination of multiple designs.

The students are in the process of finishing up their vase rough drafts and will be working on drawing their final designs with black pens on colored construction paper before we wrap up for the Winter Break. We will work on the flower component and application of polka dot stickers after the break and then we will be able to put everything together for a completed picture.

Counselor News from Mrs. Butler:

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 messages.

During the month of November, all students have begun Unit 2: Emotion Management during our Second Step lessons. The Third Grade students have learned all about emotions, especially the different levels of anger. They have also identified when and where to take a break for calming down. The Fourth Grade lessons have been focused on rethinking as a strategy for emotion management. Rethinking is a strategy where students try to think of a situation in a new way. They can ask questions like:

- What happened? What are the facts?
- Has this ever happened before?
- What is something good that could come from this? Did I learn anything new?

Lessons for Fifth Grade were all about recurring situations that create strong emotions. Students learned strategies for dealing with these strong emotions and worked on making a plan for dealing with the recurring situation.

We will be finishing up Unit 2 before the winter break.

Explore News from Mrs. Hatfield and Mrs. Spearie:

Students used glyphs to create Haunted Houses using paper sacks in Explore class this month. After they placed their Haunted Houses in our neighborhood, our Ozobot robots trick or treated at each of their houses. As students watched the robots move, they hypothesized what each of the commands for the color codes on the mat could be. Then they gave troubleshooting tips while attempting to debug issues that arose.



Inspired by the book Balloons Over Broadway by Melissa Sweet, students have used the engineering design process to create an incredible parade in the specials' hallway at West Elementary, complete with over 300 unique balloons and robotic parade floats! Come by and check it out!

Students also brushed up on their mapping skills as they mapped the parade route of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade through New York City.



Library News from Mrs. Hatfield:

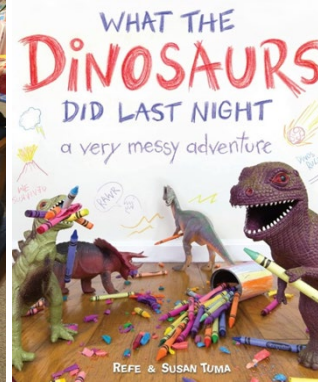
We had a very successful Fall Book Fair! Thank you to all purchased books and other items from our Scholastic Book Fair this fall. We will use the Scholastic Rewards to purchase more books for the West Elementary library for all to enjoy!

This month, we've focused our learning in library on the William Allen White book award. The William Allen White Award is a Kansas state award that recognizes the best books for children in grades 3–8 and honors the memory of William Allen White, a prominent Kansas citizen. Students in grades 3-5 are encouraged to explore the engaging titles on the 2024-2025 William Allen White Master List, which showcases a curated selection of books that captivate young readers. Students who read a minimum of two titles from the master list will vote in April to help determine the award winner.

Students listened to *The Sweetest Scoop: Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Revolution* by Stacey Innerst. This is one of the titles from the William Allen White Master List for 2024-2025. Following the read-aloud, students engaged in a virtual field trip to Ben & Jerry's where they explored the factory and the flavor graveyard. They learned about the company, making connections among the materials they read, heard, and viewed.

We've had the opportunity to enjoy lots of great books together during the month of November!

We started the month with *What the Dinosaurs Did Last Night: A Very Messy Adventure* by Refe and Susan Tuma. Throughout the month we have had special visitors in the library for "Dinovember", inspired by this hilarious book series.



Our Fifth Grade students also enjoyed a “Book Tasting” this month, sampling books from different genres. A Book Tasting is similar to a tasting menu at a restaurant, where you get small portions of different dishes to sample. Instead of food, kids “sample” books from various genres to see what they might enjoy reading more deeply.

Several students discovered new books and genres to check out!

Music News from Mrs. Hermes:

In Third Grade, students learned the fundamentals of playing the recorder. They learned the notes B, A, and G and have played the songs *Hot Cross Buns* and *Mary Had a Little Lamb*.

In Fourth Grade, students have started working on their concert music. The show is called “I Need a Vacation!” The concert is scheduled for January 9, 2025.

Fifth Grade students had a great performance of “Rock Around the 50’s!” They are already hard at work reviewing identifying notes on the treble clef staff and will begin playing recorders next week.

Students in the Third Grade classes compared and contrasted upcoming celebrations. They sang traditional songs about Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas. They also began listening to their music for their concert in February.

Students in the Fourth Grade classes were assigned speaking parts for the show, “I Need a Vacation”. They have just begun putting it all together with music, movement, and script. The performance is January 9, 2025.

The students in the Fifth Grade classes played recorders the first couple of weeks of November. They played songs with the pitches B, A, G, Low E, Low D, and High C. Then they began singing through holiday music that will be performed at our area nursing homes.

Physical Education News from Mrs. Ontjes:

October was an exciting month in P.E.! We kicked off our activities with the parachute, which the students absolutely loved. It was a joy to see their faces light up as they created waves and played games that encourage teamwork and cooperation. I then put my creativity to the test by setting up an obstacle course that challenged their agility and problem-solving skills. The students navigated through

various stations, incorporating climbing, jumping, and balancing.

We also dedicated time to developing our catching and throwing skills, essential components of many sports. This focus allowed the students to refine their techniques, while engaging in interactive games that kept everyone involved. Recently, we wrapped up some yoga sessions, where the students learned about mindfulness and flexibility.

As we approach the end of the month, we're concluding with soccer, focusing on using the inside of their feet for passing and dribbling.

Reflecting on October, it may seem like a diverse array of activities, but one of my primary goals as their P.E. teacher is to provide students with a variety of physical experiences. My hope is that through these activities, they will discover a passion for one or more of them, developing healthy habits and a love for physical activity that extends beyond P.E. class.

November has been a busy and exciting month in P.E.! We started the month by diving into soccer. We spent some time working on key skills like dribbling, passing, and shooting. The students then had the opportunity to take those skills and apply them in small-sided games. It was great to see them putting what they learned into action and enjoying the process of teamwork and strategy.

After soccer, we switched things up with a fun Cosmic Bowling unit. To add an extra element of excitement, we dimmed the lights, turned on the disco lights, and set up our bowling lanes. The kids absolutely loved the special lights in the gym!

We just wrapped up the month with Hockey, where we worked on passing, dribbling, and stick-handling. For many of the students, this was their first time using hockey sticks, so it was a lot of fun to see their faces light up as they tried something new. They worked hard on their hand-eye coordination, and it was amazing to watch them improve throughout the unit. It's always so rewarding to introduce students to new activities and see them gain confidence in their abilities.

Overall, it's been a month full of new experiences and lots of learning. It's always exciting to see students try activities they haven't done before and see how they rise to the challenge!

Technology News from Mrs. Spearie:

October is bullying prevention month, so all grade levels had the opportunity to play Kind Kingdom in Interland. This game teaches students to spread kindness to others and to block and report bullies. In addition to the game, Third Graders learned about ways to respond to cyberbullying and made Boo-grams to spread kindness to someone special in their lives.

This month, Fifth Graders mainly focused on typing skills. They worked on Intermediate typing lessons in Typing.com and tracked their lesson progress while aiming to improve their words per minute (WPM) and accuracy. They wrapped up the month by revisiting word processing skills and formatting in Google docs.

In Fourth Grade, we continued to work in the Everfi financial literacy program. This month's modules highlighted budgeting and spending as well as income and careers. Students learned how to explain the difference between a career and a job, identify money-making opportunities, and identify career possibilities based on income, skills, and areas of interest.

In Third Grade, we used Typetastic to introduce the “home row” and then used a program called Dance Mat typing to reinforce home row and upper row typing skills. We continue to work on our mouse skills through games like Island of Creatures and Interland.

Fifth Graders began the month with a digital citizenship lesson on clickbait called “You Won’t Believe This!” They learned how clickbait uses the curiosity gap to get our attention and strategies they can use to avoid clickbait. They continued with intermediate typing lessons in Typing.com particularly focusing on using the shift key for capital letters and punctuation.

Fourth Graders wrapped up their Everfi financial literacy program with lessons on Credit and Borrowing (Module 4) and Future Planning (Module 5). In Module 4, students learned the difference between buying with cash vs. credit, how a credit card works, when to borrow vs. when to buy, and understanding credit history’s importance. In Module 5, students learned to recognize the value of saving and investing, the role of financial institutions in meeting financial goals, why compound interest benefits long-term savings, and how financial risk necessitates the need for insurance.

Third Graders completed learning the keys in the top row with [Dance Mat Typing](#). They continue to work towards keeping their fingers on the home row keys, to type letters while looking down, and to use the correct fingers to type keys. They had additional typing practice of the top row keys in Typetastic. They also learned how to create strong passwords through Interland’s Tower of Treasure. They selected passwords that had at least 8 characters, a mixture of capital and small letters, as well as numbers and symbols.