

West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
October 9, 2024

Enrollment:

Third Grade: 126 – 1 Withdrawal since September Report

Fourth Grade – 127 – 1 Withdrawal since September Report

Fifth Grade – 100 – No change from August Report

Total - 353

USD 320 Strategic Plan – West Elementary Supporting Goals (Update for October):

For this month, I chose to highlight some of the work we are doing at West Elementary under “Student Success” in the Strategic Plan.

Our BLT has specifically selected to target the areas of increasing OTRs (Opportunities to Respond) in the classroom and increasing the frequency of Positive to Corrective Feedback in the classroom. Increasing OTRs includes the use of Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures, but also any opportunity that a student is given to respond. Other examples of OTRs beyond Kagan Structures include such strategies as “turn and talk to face/shoulder partners”, choral responses, the use of whiteboards to check for understanding, and many other strategies.

In order to become proficient in collecting data for these areas, our BLT members will be completing the “Basic 5 Observation” for each other. Each of us will complete at least one 15-minute Basic 5 Observation before Parent/Teacher Conferences and will continue to collect data during the 2nd Quarter of school. Beginning Second Semester, we will expand the observations to the rest of the staff so that all teachers will be gathering data from other teachers’ classrooms to determine areas of strength and areas for improvement for a variety of areas. For the first 10 minutes of the observation, staff will be looking for the following and collecting data: Ratio of Interactions (Positive to Negative – looking for a minimum a 3:1 ratio); Opportunities to Respond; Disruptions (these would only include “major” disruptions to the learning environment where a teacher must stop teaching to address the issue). For the last five minutes of the observation, teachers will be tallying on-task behavior for each student every five seconds for a total of 60 tallies. For every student that is on task within those five seconds, the child receives a +. At the end of the observation, the teacher will divide the number of pluses by 60 for the total percent of on-task behavior demonstrated during that five-minute period. To examine the Basic 5 Observation tool, click [here](#).

We are excited to collect this data and allow teachers this opportunity to get in other classrooms and learn from each other. We know that OTRs and increasing positive interactions with students increases student engagement and performance, which leads to **STUDENT SUCCESS**, and we want these to be focal points of every classroom.

We are also continuing to use some of our faculty meeting time and our PD days to provide training and support to staff on how they can increase OTRs and positive feedback to students. We gained a lot of this knowledge from our work with TASN on BSEL skills and strategies.

Walkthroughs:

I have been spending a great deal of time getting into classrooms this year and using our eWalkthrough Tool. This has always been a focus of mine (to spend as much time as I can in classrooms to provide instructional leadership, gather data on areas of strength, and identify areas for continued professional development), but this year has started off really strong. Thus far, I have completed 140 walkthroughs within the 1st 9 Weeks of school, which is an average of about four walkthroughs per day so far this school year. I will be sharing this

data with each individual teacher, as well as teams and our faculty, to help us determine areas for growth and celebration, as well as areas to improve upon.

Items for the Good for West Elementary 10-9-2024

- **High Five Friday**

We were so excited to see our own Wamego Red Raider Football Team on Friday, September 27 ready and waiting to greet our students and staff for "High Five Friday"! Thank you to all of these fine young men for showing up to support our students, staff, and school. We are so proud of each one of them! They even helped our librarian, Mrs. Hatfield, move some heavy boxes of books that she needed moved around, and they did so with a smile.

Thank you also to Head Coach, Weston Moody, for organizing the football team to come to West! Best of luck to our Red Raiders the rest of this season!

Our West PTO has started "High Five Friday", and we are looking for different groups or organizations to greet our students and staff on Fridays between 7:30-7:55am. 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!



- **Rosie the Dino Makes Appearance at West Elementary**

We were so excited and happy to Welcome Rosie the Dinosaur to West Elementary on September 25! Rosie and Roger (the dinos) were auctioned off on October 5 at the Heroes, Hotrods, and Motorcycles Car Show in Wamego to support the WHS Honor Flight. Rosie had a fun and BUSY day at West Elementary! Check out our video of Rosie's adventuresome day at West Elementary below!

[Rosie the Dino at West Elementary](#)

- **West Elementary Student Council**

West Elementary StuCo has officially started. Maddox Topliff, WHS StuCo president, joined our first meeting to share with our students his history in leadership roles throughout his Wamego career. He also shared projects at the High School that he has been involved with. He got our StuCo members excited about their new roles in our West Council!



- **Third Graders (and All West Students and Staff) Enjoy Homecoming Parade!**

We are loving this new tradition of supporting WHS in their homecoming festivities. The students are learning from a young age about Raider Pride and investing in what it means to be a Wamego Red Raider.



- **Third Grade CKLA Unit 1 Classic Tales “Par-TEA”**

Students have spent the last month in CKLA being exposed to Classic Tales such as *Wind in the Willows* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Students focused on answering comprehension questions with text evidence and exploring theme. We said goodbye to Unit 1 with a “Par-TEA” just like Alice did in Wonderland!



- **Congratulations to West Elementary Third Grade Students, Brynlee Kabriel - Kansas State Fair Pedal Pull Champion 2024, and Madison Emig, 5th Place Winner!**

We are so proud to share that West Elementary student, Brynlee Kabriel, won her division of the 2024 Kansas State Fair Pedal Pull and qualified to represent Kansas in the National Pedal Pull competition in Mitchell, South Dakota this past weekend! Brynlee received 6th Place at the National competition - last year, she came in 7th. We are so incredibly proud of you, Brynlee!

A special shout out is also given to Madison Emig, who came in 5th place in the Kansas State Fair Pedal Pull in the same age division as Brynlee. Way to go, Madison! We are super proud of you, too!

We are so proud of these strong, fierce young ladies and wish them all the best as they continue to grow and develop into strong young women! Your West Elementary family is behind you all the way!



- ***West Elementary Third Grade Student, Lily Kennelly, Selected to Perform in Kansas Ballet's Production of "The Nutcracker" This Winter!***

We are so proud of West Elementary student, Lily Kennelly, who has been cast in the Kansas Ballet's production of "The Nutcracker" this winter! Lily has been cast as an Attendant for one of the Land of the Sweets scenes and will have a small solo as part of the production. This will be her third time to perform in "The Nutcracker" and we are so very proud of her!

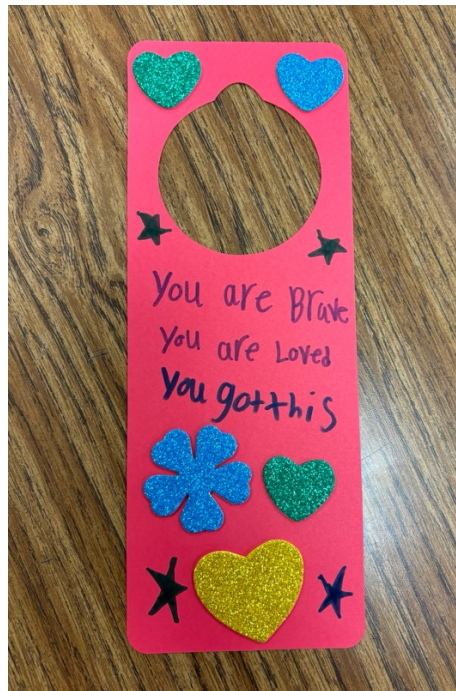
Plans are in the works to take our Third Grade students to watch Lily perform at The Topeka Performing Arts Center at their free production for schools during the day on December 18 (weather permitting). We used to take our Third Graders to "The Nutcracker" each year as part of a social studies unit, but we have not been able to attend for many years. We do think it is a great way for our students to learn more about appreciating the arts and getting the opportunity to see a live performance in a true theater environment. More info to come later!

Congratulations again, Lily! Your West Elementary family is SO proud of you!



- ***Fourth Graders Learn the Importance of Civic Engagement – Supporting Local Nursing Homes***

Fourth Grade classes created inspirational door hangers to deliver to the residents of Valley Vista and Vintage Park. This project was part of our civics unit, where we learned about the importance of being good citizens. The activity not only brightened the day for the residents, but also brought joy to the students, fostering a sense of community and connection.



- **Fourth Graders Continue Study of "The Trails" in Social Studies**

Students engaged in six interactive stations designed to enrich their understanding of the Oregon Trail, Santa Fe Trail, and the Pony Express. Activities included playing pioneer games, learning the Virginia Reel dance, and participating in a directed drawing of a covered wagon. They also explored traveling trunks from the Kansas Historical Society, which included themes like the uses of buffalo, the lives of settlers in Kansas, and trading on the Santa Fe Trail. Each station offered a hands-on approach that brought history to life and deepened their appreciation for this fascinating era.



- ***Fifth Graders Learn about Earth's Systems in Science***

Fifth Graders are learning about how Earth's systems interact with each other. During this particular lab, students worked to understand that even though the oceans have an abundance of water, not all of it is fresh or drinkable. This lab helped them understand that even though the salt isn't visible, it doesn't mean it's not there. Students also learned about evaporation which led to later lessons about evaporation and condensation, parts of the water cycle.



- ***Fifth Graders Practice Multiplying and Dividing Multi-Digit Numbers in Math***

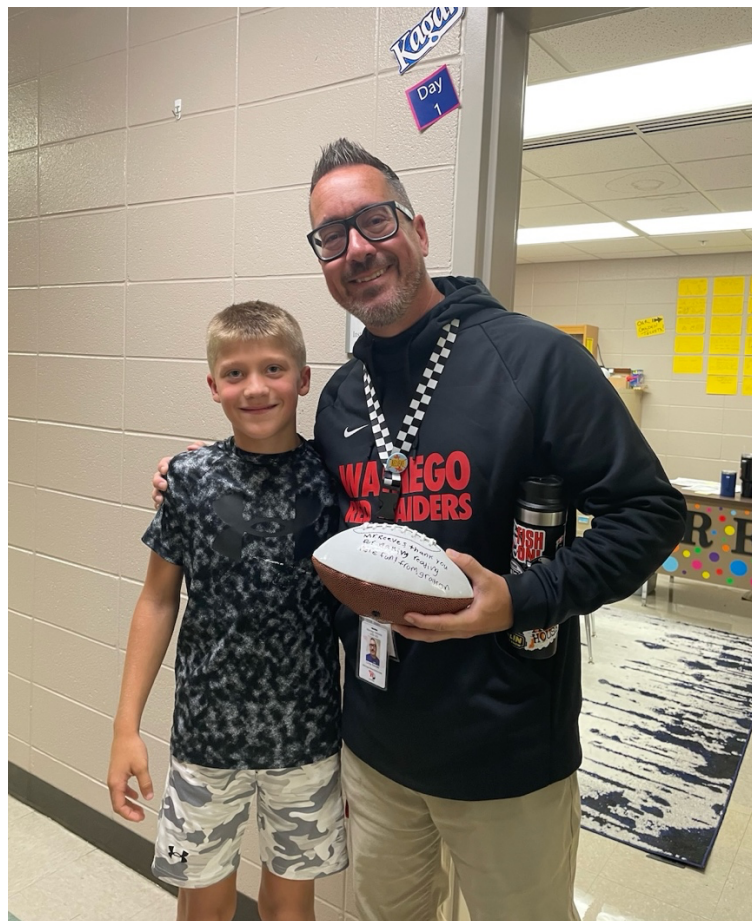
Fifth Grade students have been multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers. They build on their understanding of the basic operations, as they were introduced to numerical expressions. Students used their conceptual understanding to help them draw the number sentences/numerical expressions to make sense of the problems. Students learned about the order of operations and were given numerical expressions written in three different ways and they had to sort and match the expressions. This was really great, as they had to use higher level thinking skills to make sure the different versions of the same problem were matched together. Some of the problems were tricky and used the same numbers with different operations, so they really had to pay attention!



- ***Fifth Grade Junior Raider Football Player, Grayson Moody, Awards Reading Teacher, Corey Reeves, with Game Changer Game Ball***

West Elementary Fifth Grade student, Grayson Moody, provided his reading teacher, Corey Reeves, with the Junior Raider Fifth Grade Tackle Football Team game ball. Grayson was awarded the game ball for his performance in the win over Chapman. Grayson decided he wanted to "pay it forward" by recognizing Mr. Reeves with the game ball, due to the positive impact he has had on him and how much Mr. Reeves has "made reading fun" this year.

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



- ***West Elementary MTSS Team News***

As we delve into the academic performance of our students this year, it is crucial to examine the data in reading and math. This narrative aims to provide a comprehensive view of where we stand, the progress we've made, and the areas where we can improve.

Reading Performance

This year, our reading data reveals a complex but promising picture. We continue to work to improve our FastBridge CBM reading performance. We have implemented fluency partners in every classroom as a grade level intervention. This is an easy strategy that can be used in any subject and grade level. This is normally where we see the largest summer slump because it is difficult to encourage students to

read aloud over their summer break. We are looking forward to the gains in this area when looking closer at the winter benchmark due to the intervention that we have implemented.

West Elementary School - 2024-2025 FastBridge Data - CBMReading - English <u>Percentage of Fluent Readers</u>									
CBMR 2024- 2025	Fall Tier 1	Winter Tier 1	Spring Tier 1	Fall Tier 2	Winter Tier 2	Spring Tier 2	Fall Tier 3	Winter Tier 3	Spring Tier 3
3 rd Grade	59%			30%			11%		
4 th Grade	69%			20%			11%		
5 th Grade	63%			24%			13%		

In addition to oral reading rate, we also monitor accuracy very closely. Students are assessed on grade level passages in FastBridge. This is an area where West Elementary tends to excel as we move forward in the school year. If a student is identified as an inaccurate reader, they receive support in this area before any other sub skill of reading.

West Elementary School Percentage of <u>Accurate Readers</u> CBMReading - English			
2024-2025	Fall	Winter	Spring
3 rd Grade	83.8%		
4 th Grade	91.3%		
5 th Grade	93%		

Using FastBridge's aReading assessment to measure broad reading skills, we are pleased with the number of students currently meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. Looking at previous years data compared to this year, we are seeing a percentile decrease in our Tier 3 students, overall. This is extremely encouraging.

West Elementary School - 2024-2025 FastBridge Data - aReading Percentage of Broad Reading Skills (Comprehension)									
aReading 2024- 2025	Fall Tier 1	Winter Tier 1	Spring Tier 1	Fall Tier 2	Winter Tier 2	Spring Tier 2	Fall Tier 3	Winter Tier 3	Spring Tier 3
3 rd Grade	72%			19%			9%		
4 th Grade	79%			13%			8%		
5 th Grade	71%			20%			9%		

However, challenges in this area remain. Notably, our data indicates that approximately 26% of students are falling below expectations. This highlights the need for continued, focused strategies to support these learners. We are close to our goal of 80% of all students being in Tier 1, but understand that focused instruction will be needed to accomplish this goal.

Math Performance

Turning to our math data, we observe a somewhat different landscape. Currently, an average of 78% of students are achieving grade level proficiency. This reflects our ongoing efforts to follow our new math curriculum with fidelity and implement instructional strategies that follow the Science of Math.

West Elementary School - 2024-2025 FastBridge Data - aMath Percentage of Broad Math Skills									
aMath 2024- 2025	Fall Tier 1	Winter Tier 1	Spring Tier 1	Fall Tier 2	Winter Tier 2	Spring Tier 2	Fall Tier 3	Winter Tier 3	Spring Tier 3
3 rd Grade	81%			13%			6%		
4 th Grade	83%			11%			6%		
5 th Grade	71%			24%			5%		

Staff Data Analysis

Each grade level team has created goals using FastBridge data in the area of reading and mathematics. Teachers took time to dive into their fall data to determine how to get students to move from Tier 2 and 3 to Tier 1. After the Winter Benchmark, West staff will work as a building to dive deeper into the data and make instructional changes as needed.

- ***Specialized Team News for September 2024***

Art News from Mrs. Havice:

All three grades at West Elementary have been busy working on the design for their art folders over the first quarter. We began by discussing which design elements needed to be included within their folder's design box. From there, the students were allowed to make their own artistic choices by choosing one of six different number fonts to represent their grade level. In addition, their design had to include a variety of school supply-based shapes such as: glue bottles, scissors, pencils, erasers, and a roll of masking tape. Some of the shapes were used only once, others were repeated in a variety of sizes, and the students chose to include extra shapes if they had too much empty space when they finished incorporating all the design criteria. When including required shapes within their design, they could be shown partially, fully, or overlapped with other shapes – it just depended on the student's plan.

Once the drawing was completed, the students worked with markers to trace over all the pencil lines. They had the choice of using Sharpie or Marks-a-Lot Markers to outline their shapes with an option to emphasize their number and design box outline with more bold style lines. When the marker portion was completed and all pencil lines that remained on the paper had been erased, the students worked with developing a plan for adding color.

Adding color was more difficult than it might sound, as the students had an opportunity to work with boxes featuring 120 Crayon colors. They liked having a wide variety of colors available, but depending on the colors they were interested in, some had more variety than others. The students did a great job of taking notes on what colors they liked and made their plan for where to add the colors they selected.

When the design was finished being colored, the students were able to select one color to add as a frame for their picture. The single framing color was to help unify their artwork and allow the design box to be the focus of their picture.

Some of the ways the students solved this design-based challenge are featured below.



Counselor News from Mrs. Butler:

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. We then followed up with a growth and fixed mindset activity.

The focus for Fifth Graders was on setting and reaching personal goals. They also learned how to juggle their practice. They learned that to be more intentional about their learning they need to:

- Pick a skill.
- Find a model.
- Chase Jungle tiger reps (challenging and focused).
- Get feedback.

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. I receive a grade level snapshot of the survey results to guide my instruction.

Finally, during our time together, the students logged in to Xello and added a screenshot of their survey results. We will be 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
- Why People Work

Fourth Grade

- Skills
- Goal Setting
- Tools for Success
- Problem Solving

Fifth Grade

- Learning and Future Success
- Facing Big Challenges
- Learning Paths
- Starting a Business

Explore News from Mrs. Hatfield and Mrs. Spearie:

Our students are shining brightly in Explore Class! Check out our collaborative art display in the specialized hallway at West - it's sure to brighten your day!

This month, we completed our first STEM Challenge. Students were challenged to build their dream schools using the engineering design process. First, students were asked what their dream classroom would look like. They imagined all kinds of great possibilities and came up with a plan to connect it with their teammates to build a dream school that stands on its own. After they created their schools, they were able to test and improve them to make them more structurally sound. Finally, students shared their results and gave feedback to one another!

Mrs. Rowe's 5th grade class built this wonderful school! →



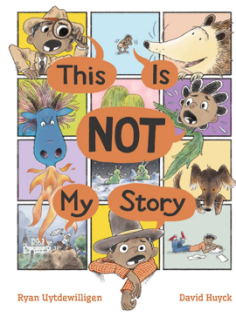
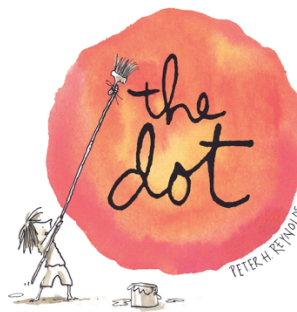
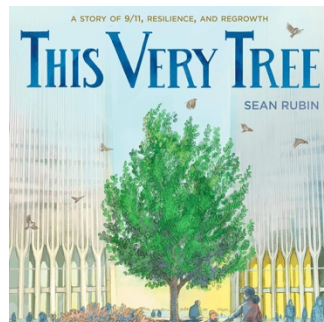
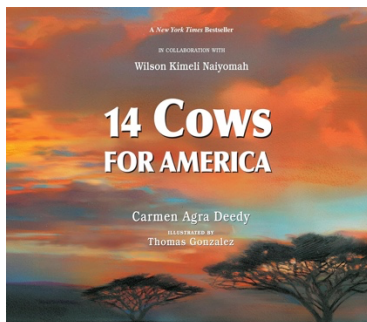
THE ENGINEERING DESIGN PROCESS



Library News from Mrs. Hatfield:

September has given us many great opportunities to read in the library! We observed Patriot Day with read-alouds of 14 Cows For America by Carmen Agra Deedy in collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah, and This Very Tree by Sean Rubin. We also celebrated National Read-A-Book Day, Dot Day, and National Comic Book Day this month!

While reading, students have identified and responded to texts representing a variety of cultures and time periods and begun exploring a multitude of reading genres. Students are also getting more familiar with our library catalog and using subject headings, keywords, and author and title when using the catalog to find books for checkout.



Music News from Mrs. Hermesch:

Fifth Grade is getting closer to their performance of "Rock Around the 50's"! The concert is Tuesday, October 22nd. Ms. Hirt, Mrs. Townsend, and Mrs. Rowe's classes will perform at 6:00 pm and Mrs. Price and Mrs. Beason's classes will perform at 7:00 pm. Hope to see you there!

Also, if any students have not returned their recorder to school, please send it. We will begin recorder playing in early November.

Fourth Grade started playing their recorders! They reviewed the pitches B, A, G and learned Low E. They played the songs "It's in the BAG", "Old Tom White", "French Song", and "Rain Rain". Earlier in the month, they reviewed how to identify notes on the treble clef staff. They learned the rhyme "Bubblegum Bubblegum" and recited with body percussion. They also did two activities with an ostinato (performing in two parts). The first song was "I Want To Rise" and the second was a rhyme called "Get Down".

Third Grade students have done several different activities to practice identifying notes on the treble clef staff. Their favorite is using the website musictheory.net to practice. We have performed the Mexican Folk Dance, La Raspa. We also learned a rhyme called "Papa Moses". We have been using our iPads more in the music classroom, too.

Physical Education News from Mrs. Ontjes:

In September, our focus in Physical Education was on tracking fitness levels and setting personal improvement goals. Students participated in multiple fitness tests, including:

- **The Pacer Test:** This measures cardiovascular endurance.
- **The Push-Up Test:** This assesses arm strength.
- **The Curl-Up Test:** This evaluates abdominal strength.

For many students, this was their first experience with fitness testing, and they all did an incredible job! We encouraged them to give their best effort, using the motto, "Do your best and forget the rest!" The purpose of these tests was to help students understand their current fitness levels.

After completing each test, students set a goal for their desired score by the end of the year, when we will conduct fitness testing again in the spring. I believe that fitness testing helps students strive toward their goals and become the best versions of themselves. I am so proud of every student for their hard work and determination during these tests.

Looking ahead, I have many exciting activities planned for October, starting with the parachute, which I know will be a fan favorite!

Technology News from Mrs. Spearie:

This month, our Third Graders learned about the parts of a computer including hardware and software. They continued to work on their mouse skills through games such as Dragon Drop. Then, they began to work on introductory typing skills. They built paper keyboards and learned about the home row keys. In the following week, they had a chance to practice typing letters in the home row using a program called Typetastic. Finally, they practiced logging into our Google Classroom with their email address and password.

In Fourth Grade, we started our Everfi unit on financial literacy skills. In Module 1, students learned how limited means necessitates responsible decision making, how to prioritize wants versus needs, and how to set and meet a goal. In Module 2, they focused on the importance of tracking expenses in order to meet a budget, how saving can improve financial options, the value of sticking to a budget, and identifying reliable sources of product information.

Our Fifth Graders worked this month on their word processing skills in Google Docs. They completed various tasks for formatting and even worked on typing a mystery shape, which was an apple. At the end of the month, they took a 1-minute test to record their current words per minute (WPM) and accuracy. Then they set realistic and achievable typing goals for the year.

- ***West Recognizes Anti-Bullying Awareness Month – October 2024***

We began our Anti-Bullying Awareness unit at school from our Second Step Curriculum the last week of September. Anti-Bullying Awareness month is the whole month of October, but we want our students to know and understand that bullying in ANY form is NEVER acceptable or tolerable! Our goal is to help develop young men and young women of integrity that treat all humans with kindness.

Lessons we are teaching over the next month are as follows:

September 30: BPU Lesson 1

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

October 7: BPU Lesson 2

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

October 14: BPU Lesson 3

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

October 21: BPU Lesson 4


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

We are also hosting a "Spirit Week" October 7 - 10:

**Anti-Bullying
Awareness Month**



Monday October 7
Team Up Against Bullying
(Wear your Chiefs or favorite
team gear)



Tuesday October 8
Put Bullying to Bed
(Wear PJs or Comfy
Clothes)

**Wednesday
October 9**
Give Bullying the
Boot
(Western Wear)

Thursday October 10
Choose Peace
(Tie Dye/Peace Out
Clothes)

Thank you for encouraging your children to always be kind to others, to work hard to include others that are being left out, to stand up for others who are being bullied, and to report bullying to a trusted adult at home and school.