

West Elementary BOE Report from Principal Amy Flinn and West Items for the Good
April 3, 2024

Enrollment:

Third Grade: 120

Fourth Grade – 103

Fifth Grade – 126

Total – 349

New Students: 1 Fourth Grader

Withdrawn Students: 2 Third Graders, 1 Fourth Grader, 1 Fifth Grader

West Building Leadership Team Updates

The West BLT is focusing on multiple items this year, with one of these being increasing the ratio of positive interactions between students and teachers and another being increasing “opportunities to respond” in the classroom, thus increasing student engagement. In order to collect data to support these goals, each member of the BLT is completing 3 observations in different teachers’ classrooms using the “Basic 5” observation format. The observer spends 15 minutes total in each classroom they are observing and completes the following: During the first 10 minutes, observe and tally the “Ratio of Interactions – Positive & Negative”; Observe and tally the number of “Opportunities to Respond” (for students); Observe and tally the number of disruptions. During the last 5 minutes of the observation, the observer spends 5 seconds recording a different student’s level of engagement as either engaged (+) off-task (-). Every 5 seconds, the observer does this for a different student until 5 minutes has elapsed. At the end, the observer divides the number of on-task marks (+) by 60 to find the percentage of on-task behavior.

Each observer will provide a copy of the recorded observation to the teacher being observed and then we will take this data and compile it for our building to determine areas for improvement. We want to be sure that we are providing at minimum 3:1 positive to corrective feedback to students and multiple opportunities for students to respond during instruction. Current research indicates the following should be provided:

- 3 to 5 OTRs for simple responses
- 1 OTR per minute when answers are more complex like solving a problem or “think, pair, share”
- 1 OTR every 10-30 minutes for longer tasks ,such as written prompts

Our BLT has also been spending time working on ideas for teacher retention. We completed a Kagan Structure of “Round Robin Write” followed by a “Gallery Walk” in our BLT to generate ideas. We encourage the BOE to review our minutes linked below to review everything we are working on in BLT.

See attached: [West BLT Minutes from March 20, 2024](#)

iPad Meeting with Kyle Pace

Several of us met with Apple representative, Kyle Pace, on Friday, March 18. It was such a great meeting! We will be doing a “refresh” of our iPads for the next school year - this means that students and teachers will be getting new iPads (iPad 10th Generation). It was so much fun to learn about some great tools, strategies, and professional development available to teachers using the information that Kyle shared with us.

- Accessibility on iPad - The iPads have so many amazing accessibility features built in on every device. This gives teachers a better understanding of what iPad can do to accommodate and empower all learners.
- Creativity with Apple - This focuses on their native Apple tools that come on every iPad and how teachers can infuse more creative expressions of learning - Keynote, Clips, etc.

- Augmented Reality with iPad - This showcases several wonderful augmented reality apps and how they can give students more engaging, interactive learning experiences. (i.e. Using FreeForm app)

We will be doing more training with all staff with Kyle on April 22 during our Professional Development Day, in addition to working on providing teachers with more training on “Opportunities to Respond” and Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures.

West Elementary Items for the Good – April 3, 2024

- **MTSS Team Professional Development Update:**

Sara McCarter attended the training “Building a Toolbox for Literacy Assessment and Intervention for Students with Complex Learning Needs anchored in the Science of Reading and Writing” offered through TASN and Infinetec in Garden City. This event provided many strategies to work with students with complex needs to teach reading, writing, and spelling and the importance of each of these components for all learners. This event gave a variety of both low-tech and high-tech strategies to use with students so every voice can be heard.

Sara McCarter, Amanda Marfield, and Teri Bailey-Johnson also worked together on a Visual Strategies project for TASN. It was part of the Advanced Practice Autism Summit. We attended training on Visual Strategies by Linda Hodgdon. We then worked together to take this information and apply it with students. We took data and presented it to other Autism Team Members across the state in order to share strategies.

- **Fourth Grade Team Nominated for Oregon-California Trail Association “Outstanding Educator Award”**

The Fourth Grade Team at West Elementary has been nominated for the Oregon-California Trail Outstanding Educator Award! This annual award by the Oregon-California Trails Association recognizes excellence in teaching about the westward overland migration. The person/institution that receives this award should be one that **enthusiastically shares the “love of trail history” with others**, teaches **accurate information**, has utilized a **unique or imaginative approach “above and beyond”** the normal teaching of this information, and is truly a **professional educator** or **provides an outstanding program that deserves national recognition for their efforts**.

Nominations for the Outstanding Educator Award are open to any individual and/or group of educators or institution/museum that **contributes significantly to students’ education about the 19th century westward overland migrations in the United States**. The work may reflect a whole unit or special project within a unit or a course on westward migration. It will be considered for its **unique or imaginative approach “above and beyond”** the normal teaching of the topic, its **appropriateness** for the students’ levels and range of abilities, the **accuracy of its historical presentation**, the range of **student participation**, and its **effectiveness** in presenting the topic to the students.

The Fourth Grade Trails Unit includes the following: Field trip to Alcove Spring, Pony Express relay race, covered wagon cookie snack, traveling trunk activities from the KS Historical Society (uses of the buffalo and pioneer games), and mules vs. oxen research for KS Socials Studies State Assessment. We study the Oregon-California Trail, Santa Fe Trail, and Pony Express.

Please take a moment to read Mrs. Flinn’s recommendation letter for the Fourth Grade Team to learn more about what they have done to be recognized for this special award.

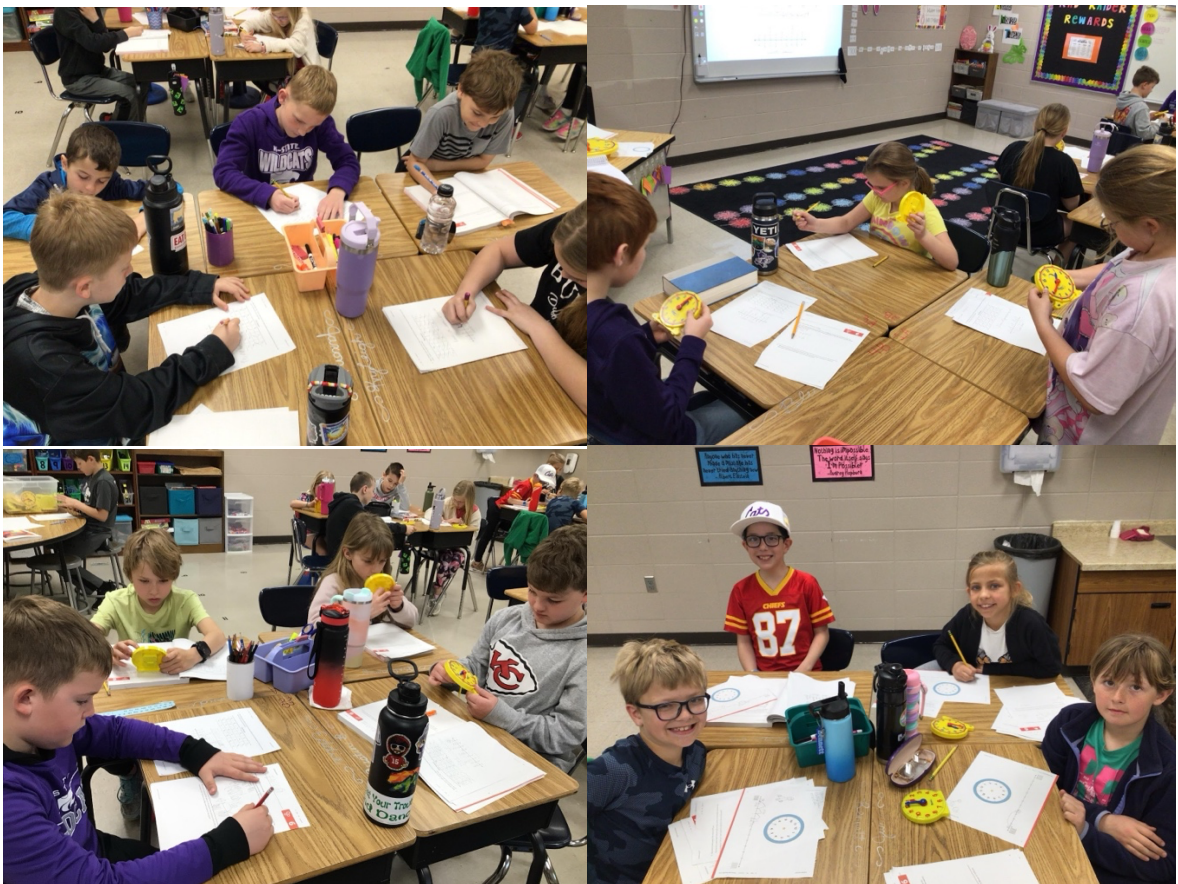
[OCTA Outstanding Educator Award Letter 2024](#)

- **Abby Ross Named Tri Valley Chapter Kansas Society of Professional Engineers Outstanding Teacher**
Abby Ross has been selected by the Tri Valley Chapter Kansas Society of Professional Engineers as the Outstanding Teacher for the Elementary level for the work she has done to support our struggling learners in the area of mathematics. Mrs. Ross is an Interventionist at West Elementary and provides instructional support for Tiered Interventions in the areas of reading and mathematics. She is a tremendous educator and we are so proud of her for winning this award! She and Mrs. Flinn will be attending a luncheon at Colbert Hills on April 18 where she will be presented her award.

- **Third Grade News:**

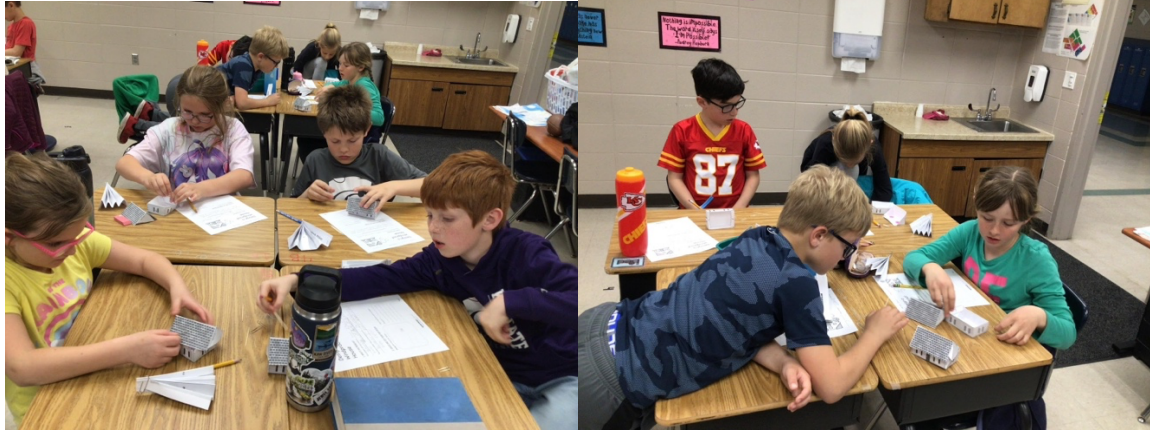
Third Graders Tell Time and Solve Interval Problems:

In Third Grade, the students use a number line to represent the scale of a clock. They count by fives or tens and then by ones to tell time to the nearest minute. Students apply familiar strategies to solve time interval word problems where the unknown is the finish line, the start time, or the elapsed time. They plot time data in fractions of hours on line plots, and they answer questions about the data.



Third Graders Design Windproof House:

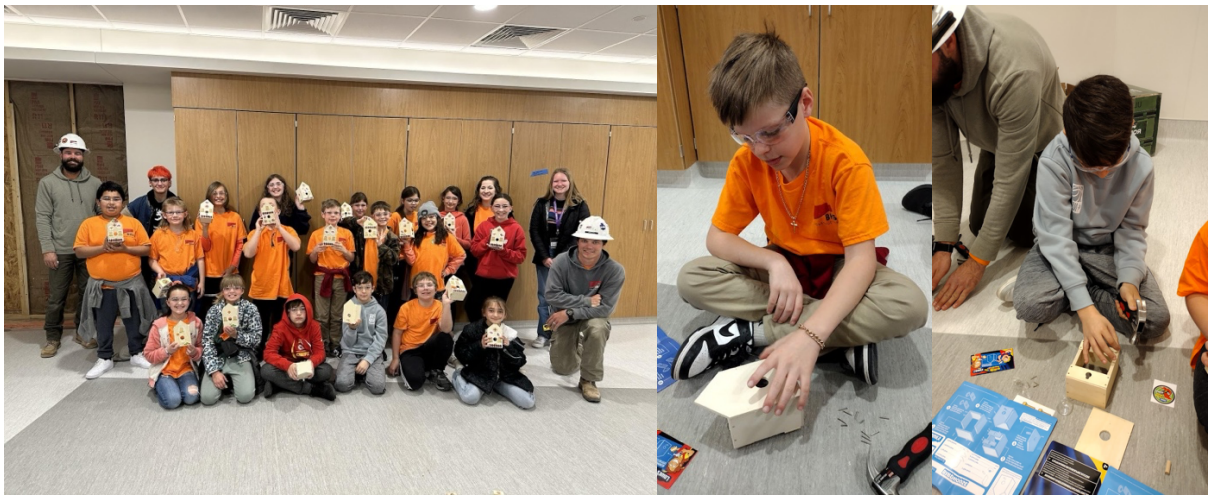
Students explored the effects of natural hazards, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and dust storms. In this hands-on activity, students built a paper house model. Then, using limited materials, students designed multiple solutions that would make their houses sturdy enough to survive a windstorm.



- **Fourth Grade News:**

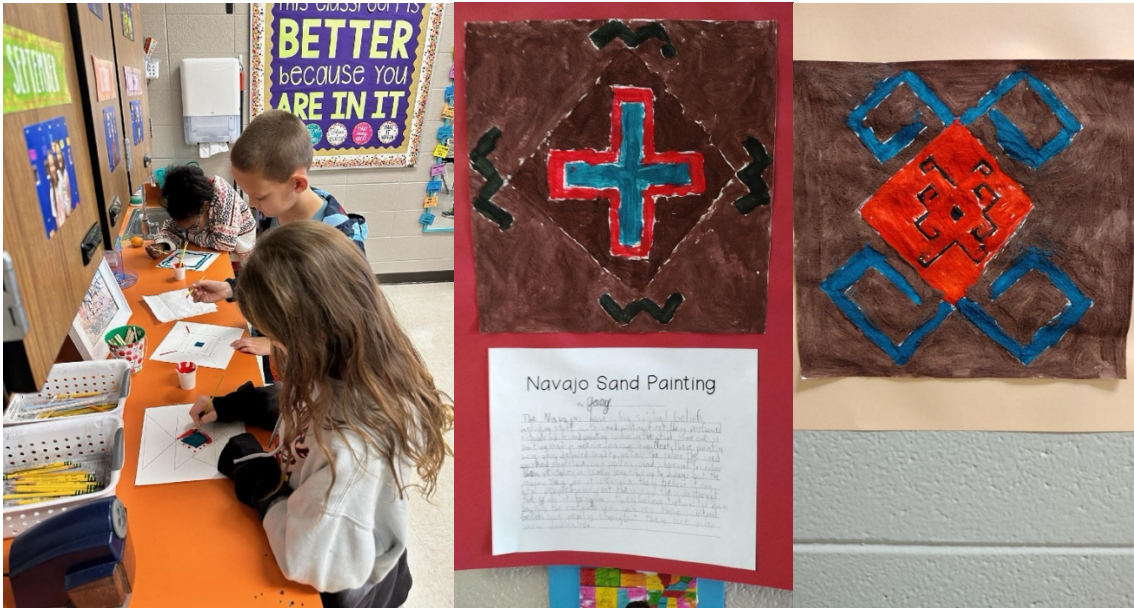
- **Fourth Grade Classroom to Career Field Trip:**

On March 18, Mrs. Ruby's Fourth Grade students visited the new MRI wing at the Wamego Health Center. BHS Construction sponsored Mrs. Ruby's class this year through the Classroom to Career program. Students have been learning about the variety of job opportunities and roles in the construction field. During their field trip, the students learned about the roles of site managers, superintendents, and subcontractors. They also toured the viewing room and MRI room. To wrap up the field trip, the students built and designed their very own birdhouses.



- **Fourth Grade Navajo Sand Painting**

When learning about the culture of the southwest region of the United States, Fourth Graders discovered the traditional art of sand painting. Students learned that during Navajo ceremonies, sacred images are painted in colored sand on the floor of a Navajo home by a skilled artisan. At the end of the ceremony, the image is swept away. Students then applied their learning by drawing and painting Native American symbols using sand paint.



- **Fifth Grade News:**

- **Fifth Graders Apply Measurement Skills:**

Fifth Grade students practiced their linear measurement skills by creating the posters below. Students followed directions to create boxes that have certain dimensions. Students used rulers to measure to the nearest one-fourth of an inch. Students were also given dimensions of centimeters to measure.



- **Fifth Graders Study Earth in Science:**

Fifth Graders have been studying the four spheres of the Earth; geosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere. One activity of our unit is to discuss the amount of water on our planet and what form it is in. Students counted different sectioned maps of the Earth's surface and estimated the

amount of salt water, frozen fresh water, and fresh water. The class then added up the number of squares of each category of water. This activity had the students divide the total number of squares by 50 to get a number for the class to graph. The results graphed resulted in the following: salt water had 78 units, frozen fresh water had 6 units, and fresh water was just under 1 unit. This activity included only the surface area. We discussed the different depths of oceans, rivers, and lakes that would change the results. Students could see the vast difference between the amounts of different types of water on the Earth.

Map 1

mystery science
How much water is in the world?

Name: _____

- How many squares of salt water are on your map?
_____ squares
- How many squares of frozen fresh water are on your map?
_____ squares
- How many squares of fresh water are on your map?
_____ squares
- I have _____ squares of salt water.
Divide by 50.
Stickers: _____ Remainder: _____
- I have _____ squares of frozen fresh water.
Divide by 50.
Stickers: _____ Remainder: _____
- I have _____ squares of fresh water.
Divide by 50.
Stickers: _____ Remainder: _____

Fresh Water Frozen Fresh Water Salt Water Land

Frozen Fresh Water Salt Water Fresh Water

- **Kansas Assessment Kick-Off**

The Kansas Assessments are in full swing at West Elementary School! We held an all-school assembly to kick-off the assessment season, where Mrs. Flinn provided some inspirational words and shared with students that we would be holding a school-wide celebration of the completion of the assessments, depending on the effort put forth by students. This event will tentatively be held on May 3 and will be called the West Elementary Assessment Celebration. Activities planned include a school-wide Dodgeball Tournament, Mobile Miniature Golf, Inflatable Obstacle Course from Ultimate Bounce, and Snow Cones from Scarecrow Snow Cones. We are also considering a Gaga Ball Tournament, if time allows.

This is the second year we have condensed down our assessment window to salvage instructional time and to increase motivation for students. Students take the Kansas Assessments over the course of 4 days (Math on 2 days and ELA on 2 days). Fifth Grade also takes the Kansas Science Assessment on 2 days.

- **Conservation Contest Winners 2024**

Congratulations to Cora Klein and Karody Hirt for receiving Honorable Mention in this year's Pottawatomie County Conservation Contest. We are proud of these young ladies!



- **Farm Bureau Safety Poster Contest Winners and Participants 2024**

The theme for this year's Pottawatomie County Farm Bureau Farm Safety Poster Contest was "Leading the Way on Farm Safety". Suggested topics for this year's theme included: Tractor Safety, Families Caring for Families, General Farmer Wellness, Mental Health Awareness, and Getting Home Safely (roadway safety). Guidelines for the most effective safety poster messages included: Emphasize farm safety, focus on one main idea, and meaning should be understood at a glance.

Congratulations to this year's winners: Kathrin Brazzle - 1st Place; Adlee Geyer and Emma Hall - Tied for 2nd Place; and LyAnn Reichle - 3rd Place! We are so proud of these young, aspiring artists! Also, we are proud of all those that submitted entries, including the following students: Brynn Markham, Stella Fiehler, Hadley King, Killian McCarter, Destin Schultz, Alice Yonning, Sernitie Rawhouser, Sinjarta Garcia, Emmrie Munson, and Coraline Karnowski.



- **4th Annual FFA/Ag Day at West Elementary School**

We will host the WHS FFA on Tuesday, April 16 for the 4th Annual Ag Day. Our students really enjoy this day of learning provided by the Wamego FFA and organized by the FFA Officers. The students will rotate through 8 different stations for about 10 minutes at each station. This is a great way to show our students the importance of agriculture in our community, our country, and our world and give

them an opportunity to interact with our high school students. This event is held on the south side of our playground. We are excited for the day!

- **Kansas Corn Commission - Bill Johnston Presentations to Fourth Grade April 26**

Bill Johnston with the Kansas Corn Commission will be presenting to Fourth Grade classes again this spring on **Friday, April 26**. The Fourth Grade Team will finalize the schedule. He will be presenting in the library.

- **Field Trips**

Field Trips have been planned for West Elementary students.

- Third Grade is going to the Topeka Capitol Building on **May 2**.
- Fourth Grade is going to the K-State on **April 30** (Kruse, Ruby, Vanderpool) and **May 2** (Greene/McIntosh)
- Fifth Grade is going to STARBASE at the National Armory in Manhattan. They will make 4 trips per class. Classes are doubling up. They start on **April 23** and end on **May 16** and rotate visits.

- **Move Up Night - Monday, May 6**

In an effort to help ease the transition between buildings and grade levels, we will offer Move-Up Night again this spring. It will be held on **Monday, May 6** from 6:00-7:00pm at Central and from 6:30-7:30pm at West. All grade level teachers and certified staff should plan to attend. I am hoping that StuCo can provide tours again this year.

- **High Voltage/Jazz Band Performance May 8!**

The High Voltage singers and Jazz Band will be performing on **Wednesday, May 8 at 10:15am** in the gym at West. This is a date change from the schedule this fall, due to conflicts for the high school. This is always such a fun performance! It will last no more than 30 minutes.

- **Second Grade Transition Day - May 16**

Our Second Grade Transition Visit will be **Thursday, May 16 (tentatively)** from 10:15-11:45am. We'll go over some basic info and welcome our incoming Third Graders. Each class will be paired with a Third Grade classroom. They will tour the building with their cooperating class and learn more about the classroom from their time with the Third Graders and Third Grade Teachers. I will also be meeting with them in the library. We are NOT going to have them over during lunch/recess, due to the congestion and safety issues this presents!

- **Talent Shows Friday, May 10 and Monday, May 20**

West Elementary Talent Shows will be held on **Friday, May 10** (Fifth Grade) and **Tuesday, May 20** (Third/Fourth Grade) during specials. This is a fun event for our students to showcase their talents!

- **News from West Specialized Staff for March 2024:**

Art News:

Exploring the Art of Michael Albert

The Third Graders at West have recently begun working on a new project that is exploring the work of artist Michael Albert. Albert is known as a modern Pop Artist for using cereal boxes and other product packaging to create mosaic style collages. This type of art has earned the name of Cerealism and it all began with an empty box of Frosted Flakes cereal that the artist didn't want to throw away. The students are using a variety of types of shapes for their mosaics as a follow-up to information that they learned about and discussed during CKLA earlier in the school year.

Counselor News:

During the short month of March, students began learning about problem-solving strategies. Students have been reviewing the Second Step problem-solving steps.

S=Say the Problem

T=Think of Solutions

E=Explore the Outcomes

P=Pick a Solution

They will use their empathy and emotion management skills to help them be calm when they are faced with a problem. Once they can do that, they will be ready to understand another’s point of view so they can use their strategies to be problem-solvers.

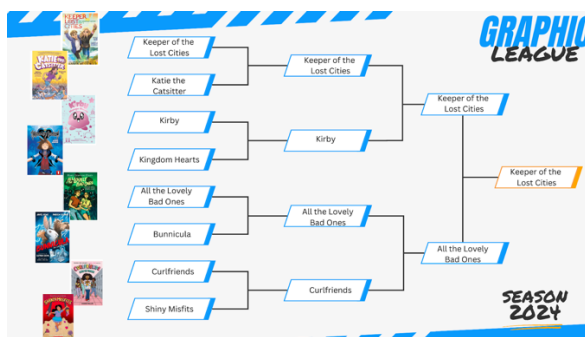
All students have been working very hard to complete all the missions in Xello so that we can begin our career exploration project in April. The students will use a variety of information about themselves to choose a career to research. The students will then create a presentation about the career that interests them. Students will be working on their project the remainder of the year.

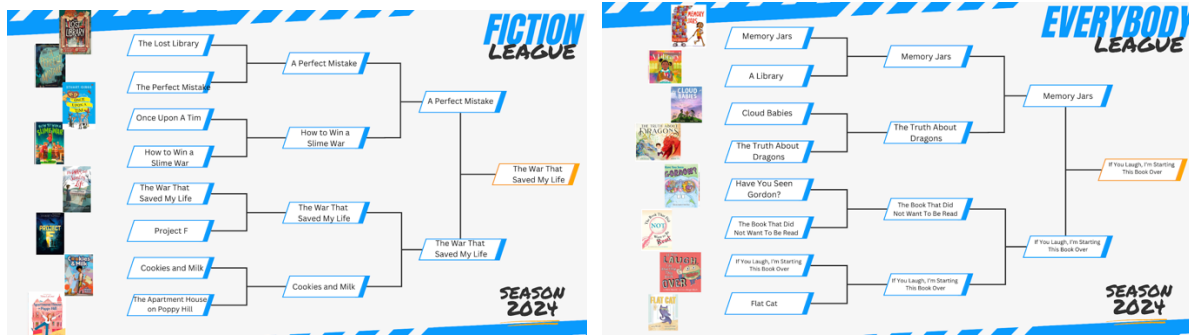
Explore News:

Our pollinator garden is underway! Fourth Grade students helped plant seeds in the raised bed in front of West. Students planted a variety of native Kansas plants, dill, and zinnias to attract pollinators, including monarch and swallowtail butterflies! While waiting for our seeds to germinate, we have also spent some time practicing cursive writing.

Library News:

It’s March Madness in the library! Students helped us select the best books to add to our collection with our March Madness Book Bracket. Books representing each category of our library collection were placed in leagues, and the winner of each league will be purchased and added to the West Elementary library collection!





This month, our library students are diving into the reference section. We will be looking at information authority. Students will seek and select the most appropriate reference sources of information (e.g., books, databases, and websites). They will also evaluate resources for currency, credibility, and authority.

Music News:

It has been a quick month, but a busy one, in the music classroom.

Fifth Grade students have chosen first and second choices of instruments if they choose to join Sixth Grade Band. The Band Directors have visited them here at West and have played all of the instruments for them. In April, the students will try-out the instruments to see what best fits them. We have also been reviewing all the music concepts we have learned this year, as we will begin playing recorders again in April.

Fourth Grade students have reviewed identifying both Treble Clef and Bass Clef notes. They also have learned about Dynamic and Tempo markings, Time Signatures, Note and Rest Names and Values, and counting rhythms with numbers. They recited the rhyme “Peter Piper” and learned about sixteenth notes.

Third Grade students have been memorizing the “Star Spangled Banner”. We also read the book, Home on the Range: John A. Lomax and His Cowboy Songs. We have begun learning our state song, “Home on the Range”. We also have been learning the true names of notes and rests and how many beats they receive.

P.E. News:

We had a great, short month of March in PE at West. We began a badminton unit where students practiced skills individually and with a partner. We then had the opportunity to play doubles and learn some of the rules and get experience playing with a partner against an opponent. Fifth Grade then concluded the unit by holding a “March Madness” style badminton tournament. Winners of the tournament from each class are pictured below.



Technology News:

Fifth Grade is working on a “dream vacation” research project. They were allowed to choose the destination of their choice. They first had to put pen to paper and write essential facts on a provided worksheet. They will use a choice board for their reference materials. They are researching their destination/countries: culture, flag, population, landmarks, foods, etc. They will research flights and hotel stay costs. Students will present their work in a Google Slide presentation, which they must turn in through Google Classroom by the provided due date.

Fourth Grade is working on lessons through Everfi, which the Bank of the Flint Hills sponsors. Students are learning about financial literacy, with lessons including financial decision-making, budgeting and spending, income and careers, credit and borrowing, and planning for the future. Each student is following the online modules and must pass the end-of-unit questions before moving on to the next topic.

Third Grade continues to strengthen beginning typing skills, including identifying home row, working towards 5-10 WPM, and using two hands when typing. All grades had the opportunity to explore engineering using Strawbees and iO Blocks (see pictures below).



- **West PTO Updates**

The West PTO met on March 25 for its regular meeting. They reviewed past projects and planned for the future. Their most recent project includes the Classroom Basket Raffle. Students love this event where they have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a variety of Classroom Baskets put together by donations from families.

PTO spent time discussing plans for the West Assessment Celebration, Teacher Appreciation Week, and the Fifth Grade End of Year Celebration. They also discussed the new company they will be using to sell school supplies and creating a separate West PTO Facebook Page. The next meeting will be April 23.