

Wamego West Words

Volume 14, Issue 1

September 1, 2011



PRINCIPAL'S POINTS . . .

It has been an exciting start to the new school year for our students and staff! I am looking forward to working with each of you in the year ahead. Our custodial staff has worked very hard this summer to ensure our school is in "tip-top" shape. The building looks clean and beautiful! When you get a chance, please let our custodians know how much you appreciate all they do for West.

I would like to thank Mrs. Robin Butler for substituting as building principal while I am on maternity leave with our baby boy. I plan to return sometime in November.

Please take time to read the West Words each month with your child. This newsletter will provide important information about West Elementary School, as well as feature special articles on our students and each grade level. You may access the West Words on our website at www.usd320.com.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the West Carnival on Friday, September 16 from 5:30-8:00pm. If you have not signed up to work at your child's classroom booth, please contact Lori Rice or Angie Matthews at ricel@usd320.com or angieben@wamego.net. We will provide periodic updates on the West PTO blog at <http://wamegowestpto.blogspot.com>.

I am a firm believer in developing relationships with students and parents and I want to get to know each of you so that we can best serve your child. Please feel free to contact me anytime at school (456-8333) or by email at flinna@usd320.com. I will be happy to meet with you when I return from maternity leave! We look forward to working with you and your child this year!—Mrs. Flinn

West Elementary Bullying Prevention

Dan Olweus, Ph.D. at the University of Bergen Norway, developed the bullying prevention program in place at West Elementary School. Dr. Olweus conducted extensive research in the development of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The Olweus research has now been evaluated as a "blueprint" program through the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Schools that implement the Olweus program see up to a 70% reduction in bullying behaviors within two years. West implemented this program five years ago. Bullying has been reduced considerably as a result.

The theme for our program is modeled after the "FISH" philosophy. The "FISH" philosophy is a simple approach for working and dealing with people positively on a day-to-day basis. The principles of "FISH" are *Play, Make Their Day, Be There, and Choose Your Attitude*. In conjunction with this "philosophy" our school motto against bullying is as follows: *"Welcome to our school. No hooks allowed!"* The term "school" in this motto represents a "school of fish" that always works together and supports one another. The term "hook" represents those things that bullies do to inflict pain (physical, emotional, or social) on their targets.

Our bully prevention "kick-off" will be later in September where students will learn how to be a H.E.R.O. (Help rescue the victim; Educate others; Report bullying to an adult; and Offer friendship). At school, we will continue to work with students on "what bullying **is** and what bullying **is not**". We will also be giving students tools to help them address these issues if and when they arise. We will follow four "school rules" against bullying and implement these with our students. The rules are as follows:

- *We will not bully others.*
- *We will help students who are being bullied.*
- *We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out.*
- *When we know someone is being bullied, we will tell at least two adults.*

Our goal is to maintain a safe, nurturing, positive school environment for all of our students to ensure that they can learn and develop in optimal conditions. It is absolutely critical that we have parent support of this program in order to ensure its success. We ask that each of you convey to your children that as parents you will not tolerate any form of bullying and that you expect your children to treat all individuals in a kind and respectful manner.

With your help and support, we will continue to work toward creating a bully-free environment and keep West Elementary as a safe, inviting place for everyone.



West News You Should Know...

Birthday Dinner

The date for September's birthday dinner will be Wednesday, September 21. Parents (or other guests) who would like to eat birthday dinner should call the school office (456-8333) no later than 8:30am the day of birthday dinner. Birthday dinner is normally the third Wednesday of the month.

Wamego Junior Raiders Day

We will celebrate two Wamego Junior Raiders Days per month. Students and staff should wear their Junior Raiders clothing or red on Junior Raiders Days. Your child may purchase Junior Raiders t-shirts or hoodies through the school office. The cost for t-shirts is \$8, and cost for hoodies is \$18. Junior Raiders Days for September are September 9 and 23.

School Pictures

School pictures are scheduled for Monday, October 10. Picture envelopes will be sent home at a later time with more information on ordering.

Shuttle Bus and Arrival at School

A reminder for all shuttle bus students-if you catch the shuttle at the middle school in the morning, be sure to arrive no earlier than 7:15am and no later than 7:30am. Central shuttle bus students should arrive no earlier than 7:40am. Students who walk or are dropped off at school should not arrive any earlier than 7:45am, as staff are not on duty until this time. Breakfast is not served until 7:45am each day.

Sending Money to School

All money sent to school for fees, lunches, etc., should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, homeroom teacher's name, and a note explaining what the money is for on the outside of the envelope. We also remind you that lunch and breakfast money will need to be paid for with a separate check from all other school fees.

Student Phone Calls/Messages

Students will not be called to the telephone during the day unless it is an emergency. All messages will be given to students at the end of the day. However, we encourage parents to communicate information to students/teachers in writing or by email to keep phone messages to a minimum.

No Latex Balloons

Latex balloons are prohibited in all USD 320 school buildings. You may send Mylar balloons available through local Wamego merchants.

Additional School Information

- ◆ The school day begins at 8:05am each day. Students are dismissed to classes at 8:00am when the first bell rings. Students arriving after 8:05am will be considered tardy.
- ◆ We encourage regular attendance of all of our students. However, when your child is absent from school, please notify the office (456-8333) by 8:30am. Student assignments will be available upon request. (Please pick up assignments on the shelves in front of the office, if you have requested them, after 3:30pm. The building closes at 5:00pm.)
- ◆ The next West PTO Meeting for the year will be held Thursday, September 1 at 6:00pm in the West Elementary Library. All parents are encouraged to attend!
- ◆ The first West Site Council meeting for the school year will be held Thursday, September 1 at 7:00pm in the West Elementary Library.
- ◆ When your child is late or needs to leave school early, you will need to sign your child in or sign your child out at the office. Also, ALL VISITORS MUST SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE, including parents who would like to visit with their child. Please do not go directly to any classroom.
- ◆ We have a new security system in place at West. The building will be locked down at all times. A video camera will allow us to see individuals that are visiting the school and then allow entrance to guests by releasing the lock from the office. Please understand that you may be asked to provide identification if staff do not recognize you.
- ◆ Non-custodial parents or parents with shared custody who want school information mailed to them need to alert the office of this in writing. Enrollment forms included this information. Parents may update this information by contacting the school office.
- ◆ Tired of writing checks to pay for school meals, or relying on your child to get money to the office? Register with www.ezschoolpay.com and have the option of adding money to your child's meal account by use of a credit card. In order to access EZ School Pay, you will need your child's school ID number. If you do not have this, please contact the office and we will be happy to provide it to you! This service does include a small fee by the EZ School Pay site.
- ◆ Please be sure to access Power School for updates on your child's classroom performance. We hope you will take advantage of this great service! Also, please allow teachers up to one week to post grades for tests and other assignments.



West Elementary PTO

The first PTO meeting of the 2011-2012 school year was held Thursday, August 4 at 6:00pm in the library. The focus of the meeting was the upcoming West Elementary Carnival. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 1. We encourage each and every one of you to become involved with PTO as we journey through the new school year. Please come to our meetings to learn more about PTO.

The ultimate purpose of the West PTO is *to promote the welfare of ALL children and to keep home and school connected*. The PTO consists of parents and teachers working together for the common goal of making our school a better place for our children.

If you have any questions about PTO, please contact one of the following officers:

- **President—Amy Schwein-456-8014**
- **Vice-President—Angie Matthews-456-7527**
- **Secretary—Amy Donahue-456-8985**
- **Treasurer—Jill Hupe-456-7113**

We have a great Label Saving Committee this year! Our Co-Chairs are Stacie Jones and Angie Matthews. Please be sure to save your Campbell's Soup labels, Box Tops, Tyson panels, empty foil drink pouches, and empty Frito Lay chip bags. Receptacles for these items are located in the lunchroom.

PTO will continue to sponsor the Club's Choice fundraiser. The fundraiser will run from September 30 to October 10, with delivery of items on November 1 from 5:30-7:00pm. More information about the fundraiser is provided in the article at the right of this page.

The following dates have been set for classroom parties:

- **Halloween—Monday, October 31-2:30pm**
- **Christmas—Wednesday, December 21-2:30pm**
- **Valentine's Day—Tuesday February 14-2:30pm**

Again, please consider getting involved with PTO. It's a great way to support our children and our school!



West Elementary PTO Fundraiser Set for September 30 – October 10

The first West PTO fundraiser for the 2011-2012 school year is about to begin!

The fundraiser includes the sale of various food items from the Club's Choice brochure. West has received over \$86,000 with this fundraiser and this money has been put to very good use! Our fundraiser has provided the following items for West students: two sets of soccer goals, half of the expense of the playground structures, 10 picnic tables for our picnic area, educational games, field trips, guest speakers, classroom materials, the purchase of 50" plasma screen TV's for each classroom, Interwrite SchoolPads for each classroom, and funded a portion of our new 25 computer mobile lab! Our current goal is to continue to enhance the technology tools available to students and staff at West!

The sale begins Friday, September 30. If your child needs more order forms, please have him/her come to the office. Checks should be made payable to West Elementary PTO. Please make sure you collect payment at the time of the sale! Please, no door-to-door sales. We want students to know WHOM they are selling to for safety purposes. Also, participation is strictly voluntary! Students do not have to sell!

The sale concludes on Monday, October 10. Students need to turn in both copies of their order forms to their teachers. Students will get the original (top, white) copy back with their orders. **Please be sure that the student's name and home phone number is completed on the top of the order form before it is turned in to the teacher.**

Pick up day is set for Tuesday, November 1 from 5:30-7:00pm. Pick up will be along the curb in the parking lot, weather permitting. You can simply pull up to the curb and we will bring your order to you and load your car! There will be no need for you to even get out of your vehicle! All orders must be picked up on this date and in this time frame. There is no second delivery day. If you can't pick up your items during this time, please make arrangements with someone to pick up your order.

Please read the awards brochure included in the seller's packets for further details. The more you sell, the bigger and better the prize you will receive! Also, PTO will award the top sellers with gift cards to Wal-Mart!

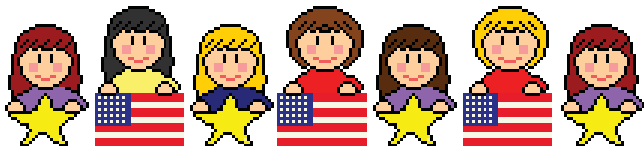
PTO News Continued. . .

We had 63 students participate in the Trash Bag Fundraiser last spring and raised approximately \$1,500! This year, we will add a kick-off to get the kids motivated, have classroom competitions, have students will chart their sales, and provide better communication to students and parents about the event. We will also hold the fundraiser in February.

Please note that if you have a Dillon's card and shop there, you can go online and register your card to donate money to our school every time you buy a product in the Labels for Education program!

Reminder that the Carnival will be September 16—mark your calendars now, as we'll need your help to make it successful!

Fifth grade had their annual celebration on the last day of school in May. Due to inclement weather, the students spent the day at the school (rather than the usual swimming party), but thanks to Chairs Amanda Jantz and Katie Fritz, the students had a wonderful day! They played games in the morning in the gym, followed by the creation of their own class music video! All students received a copy of the video on DVD as a keepsake from West Elementary School. The DVDs were made available by PTO. The students also enjoyed lunch with their teachers and parents and ended the day with some other special activities. A special thank-you goes out to Amanda Jantz and Katie Fritz for organizing the day, to Lori Rice for helping Amanda with the DVD, and to all of the other parent volunteers that made the day so special for our fifth graders!



All the News That's Fit to Eat!

Brought to you by USD 320 Food Service

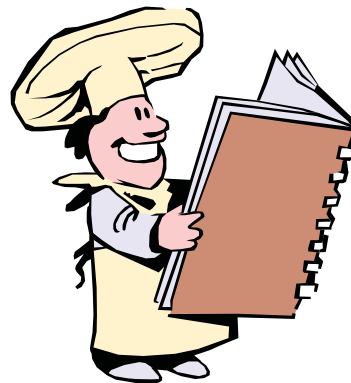
Food Service welcomes West Junior Raiders!!

Our Food Service Staff: Donna Jones, Kathy Blackford, Barbara McGuire, Mary Kay Elder, and Shannon Schneider are excited to be serving all the Jr. Raiders breakfast and lunch this year. Please stop by and say "Hi!" when you see them.

Guests are always welcome to join their student at lunch. **This year we are requiring that you call by 8:30am the day you plan to eat with us so that we can provide you with an adult meal (\$3.25). If you have not called in to reserve your meal, you may still sit with your child but we will be unable to offer you a lunch.**

Nutrition Advisory Committee (NAC) meetings will be held once a month during breakfast to discuss school meals and nutrition. We are recruiting FIVE new third, fourth, and fifth graders for NAC – if you are interested in signing up, please ask a cook for a sign-up sheet or return the attached form.

School menus can be found on the web at www.usd320.com. If you have any questions regarding Food Service, please call Food Service Director, **Laura Fails** at 456-2214 during the school day. We are looking forward to a great year!



Fourth Grade Studies Oregon and Santa Fe Trails in Social Studies

Fourth grade began the year in social studies by studying the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails. Our Kansas standards require that fourth grade students describe life on the Santa Fe and Oregon-California Trails. Included in this description is understanding the interactions between different cultural groups, hardships such as lack of water, mountains and rivers to cross, weather, the needs for medical care, choosing the size of wagon, and which type of animal to haul the wagon.

Students will spend time mapping the routes, as well as comparing and contrasting the benefits of taking oxen or mules on the trip. They will write a persuasive piece as to which animal would be best to take on the trail. Students also generated a list of items they would take to make a successful journey. This year we will also spend some time looking at the similarities and differences of the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails.

MAP Testing

During the first two weeks of September, students at West Elementary will be given the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in the areas of reading and mathematics. These MAP tests will be given online in our computer lab starting on September 6. Each of the two tests will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Parents will receive their child's report at fall Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences. Each teacher will review the results with parents and help answer any questions regarding their child's performance on the MAP tests.

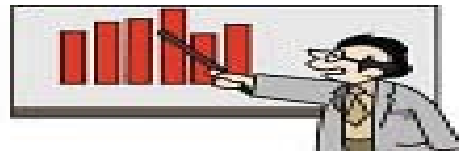
Teachers use the MAP results to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses and to help guide their instruction. These results are also studied and analyzed during teaming time to address specific grade level concerns.

Go to www.nwea.org and click on the Students & Parents tab for more information on the MAP assessments.

Fourth Graders Read Graphs in Math

In math, fourth grade students started the year with some graphing activities to get to know their classmates better. Students collected data and then learned to properly graph the data they collected. Students discussed the differences between numerical and categorical variables. Parents should look for graphs in the newspaper and magazines and review with their children the information that the graphs demonstrate.

We have spent time talking about the title of a graph, the x and y axis, how they should be labeled with a variable, how to correctly place bars on graphs, and how to use the data from graphs to compare and contrast information.



Saving Now for College Later: Learning Quest® 529

As a parent, planning for your child's future is of vital importance to you. Investing in their postsecondary education is one of the most significant contributions you can make. A college education can open doors to endless opportunities. It challenges students to think big, strive higher, and can instill the desire to make a difference.

The Kansas State Treasurer's office has partnered with American Century Investment Management, Inc., to bring you one of the most comprehensive education investing programs in the nation. The Learning Quest® 529 Education Savings Program has been designed with features and benefits to make investing for college a reality.

Benefits include:

- potential tax advantages
- diversified and professionally managed investments
- multigenerational estate-planning
- easy and convenient ways to invest

Additionally, if you are a Kansas taxpayer, you are eligible to receive an annual Kansas adjusted gross income deduction for contributions up to \$3,000 (\$6,000 if married, filing jointly) per student.

Go to www.learningquestsavings.com for more information. The program administrator is Kansas State Treasurer, Ron Estes. You may also call to speak with a specialist at 1-800-579-2203.

West Receives Wolf Creek Science Grant

Last spring, we received a grant from Wolf Creek to develop an Outdoor Classroom. This will be a large project to get up and running, but once it is established, we will have an outdoor learning space for years to come.

There will be five sections in the Outdoor Classroom. The middle of the classroom will consist of a section in a 10x10 grid made of 12" square tiles. These will be used for math activities. Each corner of the grid will have an extended space of about 10 feet by 10 feet. These spaces will include a life cycle garden for attracting and studying butterflies and hummingbirds, a natural Kansas area for studying Kansas plants, a sand area for studying archeology, and a water area for studying simple water life. There will also be a weather station for weather data collection, a sundial, and a compass. We are very excited about the opportunities the Outdoor Classroom will offer students and teachers.

A workday will be set sometime for this fall. There are many ways your family can help support the development of the outdoor science classroom. We need manpower, materials, and equipment. Below is a list of some ideas:

Workers: gardeners, wood workers (for making benches, storage areas, and signs), people for construction of the site

Materials: low maintenance plants, trees, flowers, shrubs, bird feeders, pots, potting soil, berry-yielding plants/bushes (blueberries, blackberries, native plants), fruit trees, butterfly bush (buddleia)

Equipment: shovels, large dump truck to haul sand, planting tools

We will most likely have to spend a day preparing the area and laying the foundation such as stones, weed cloth, timbers, and outlining the gardening space. Then we will spend a second day planting.

If you are able to help, please contact Lori Rice at ricel@usd320.com or at 456-8333 (ext. 3123). She will be organizing our list of volunteers and will contact volunteers when we set up our workday. Groups are welcome!

A special thank you is extended to Ms. Rice for writing the grant, designing the Outdoor Classroom, and for organizing the volunteers to build the space!

Kansas School Safety Hotline and other Safety Tips

The Kansas State Department of Education, in cooperation with the Kansas Highway Patrol, established a school safety hotline in 1999. This hotline is a toll free number available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year to give students, parents, and community members the opportunity to report any impending school violence.

As you are aware, students usually have knowledge of potential school violence before it occurs. This hotline gives students the opportunity to anonymously report any potential violence.

The Kansas School Safety Hotline Number is 1-877-626-8203. Personnel at the Salina Central Dispatch of the Kansas Highway Patrol will answer the hotline number. The dispatchers will get as much information about each situation reported as the caller wishes to relay.

Upon receipt of a call, the dispatchers will notify appropriate law enforcement agencies and/or the office of the superintendent of schools, depending upon the severity of the situation.

Mrs. Flinn will be sending home a letter to all parents regarding safety procedures for their children. As a reminder, parents can access the KBI "Registered Offender" website that gives information and addresses of registered offenders living in our community and county. For more information, log on to www.accesskansas.org/kbi.

Another useful website that parents can access is www.familywatchdog.us. When you visit this site, enter your address and a map will show where convicted criminals live in relationship to your home.

It is our first and foremost goal to provide a safe, nurturing environment for your children in order for them to do their best in school and optimize their learning capacity. Their safety outside of school is equally important to us at West Elementary!

West Elementary Carnival

Friday, September 16
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Go for the fun!

Games, Hamburger or Hot Dog Meal,
Food Court, Cake Walk,
Inflatable Rides, Class Basket Raffle,
Silent Auction, Prizes, and much more!

The Carnival helps fund classroom technology projects, field trips, guest speakers, and other needs for students at West Elementary School!

Literature Group to Begin in September

Third, fourth, and fifth graders will be given the opportunity to participate in Literature Group this year. Book discussions will be held six times this year beginning in September. Each grade level will meet a different Friday each month from September through February. Students will bring their lunches to the library and share books with a parent facilitator. Students are asked to complete a short information paper on their book and will be required to bring it with them each time they come to Literature Group. Parents, please offer to volunteer your time for this tremendous opportunity for the students.

September dates are as follows:

- 3rd grade – 11:30-12:00 on September 9
- 4th grade –12:00-12:30 on September 16
- 5th grade – 11:00-11:30 on September 23

The remainder of the dates will be distributed in September. Grade levels will meet in this same rotation throughout the year, with exceptions in October and November due to school scheduling conflicts.

MTSS Interventions

Next month, we will feature an article about our MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Interventions that implemented last year to support students in reading. These are Corrective Reading, Phonics for Reading, and REWARDS. Each of these programs target specific reading difficulties in children to help bring them up to grade level. Be watching for more info next month!

Calendar of Events

September 1 PTO – 6pm
Site Council 7pm
September 5 No School—Labor Day
September 6 MAP Testing begins today!
September 7 MAP Testing
September 8 N.A.C. Meeting—7:30am
MAP Testing
September 9 Wamego Junior Raiders Day
Third Grade Literature
Group – 11:30am-12:00pm
Fourth Grade Grandparents'
Day in Wamego City Park—
11am-2pm
MAP Testing
September 12 MAP Testing
September 13 MAP Testing
September 14 MAP Testing
Healthy Smiles Dental Clinic
September 15 MAP Testing

September 16 MAP Testing
Fourth Grade Literature
Group – 12:00-12:30pm
West Elementary
Carnival—5:30-8:00pm
September 18 Kansas Teacher of the Year
Banquet in Topeka—Sherry
Helus being honored as USD
320 Elementary Teacher of
the Year!
September 20 “Hello, Mr. Brown”
Presentation – 10:00am
September 21 Birthday Dinner
September 23 Wamego Junior Raiders Day
Fifth Grade Literature
Group – 11:00-11:30am
Bully Prevention Kick-Off
September 27 Bigs in Schools Match Day
September 30 Club’s Choice Fundraiser
Kick-Off