

April Newsletter

Westwood Elementary

Principal's Note

Dear Families,

This month, grades 3-5 will be taking our state's standardized tests in reading and math. Our fifth-grade students will also be required to take the science assessment.

Let's work together to make your child's experience a positive and successful one. We have been preparing at school with the use of interim assessments and KITE mini tests that review the standards, build confidence, and help students familiarize themselves with the format of these important assessments. In addition, we plan to have a building testing kick-off assembly on Friday, April 1st at 1:30 to establish an inspiring, enthusiastic atmosphere that helps our students feel supported, motivated, and valued during this essential time.

Here are some suggestions you can do to help support your child during state assessments:

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time
- Have your child eat a healthy breakfast at home or at school
- Ensure your child gets a good night's sleep
- Gently encourage them to do their best

Testing will take place on the following dates:

- Reading: April 5th and 7th
- Math: April 12th and 14th
- Science: April 19th and 20th

As partners in your child's education, we are asking for your help in reminding your child of the importance of taking his/her time and putting forth his/her best effort on these assessments.

**Thank you for your ongoing support,
Kimberly Dressman, Westwood Principal**

READING SPIRIT WEEK: APRIL 4TH-8TH



MONDAY: - "WORK OUT" THE TESTING
JITTERS WEAR WORKOUT CLOTHES

TUESDAY: - "DRESS FOR THE TEST"
WEAR YOUR BEST ATTIRE

WEDNESDAY: - "ROCK THE TEST"
DRESS LIKE A ROCKSTAR

THURSDAY: "YOU'RE SO BRIGHT"
WEAR NEON COLORS

FRIDAY: LET'S SHOW OUR SCHOOL
SPIRIT! WEAR A WESTWOOD SHIRT





Pre-K

In our PreK classroom we will begin working on Unit 8: Nature. In this unit we will be focusing on the parts of a plant, how plants grow, what is under our feet, what is a habitat, what are the seasons, how does weather change and affect people, how do we take care of the earth and the wonders of nature that we enjoy.

You can extend learning at home by inviting your child to help you make a snack of celery and carrot sticks. Talk about how carrots and celery are vegetables that are parts of plants. This discussion will help your child better understand the science concept of plants. While you are outside talk with your child about how plants have different parts. If possible, point out flower, stem, or leaf as you walk outside. Discuss how plants need water, light, and soil to grow. Go visit a nursery or garden center, talk with your child about how plants are living things. Show him or her different types of plants, flowers, stems, and leaves.

In math, students will begin to write numerals 0-5 and count to 20. They will start to explore addition and subtraction stories with numbers 0-5, a natural way for them to understand adding to and taking from. Stories are acted out, modeled with objects, drawn, or solved using pictures. Children ask and answer questions about the story, such as "How many in all?" or "How many are left?" They learn to distinguish the question from the story.

In science we will be learning about the use of soil, trees, insects, and sound. In social studies we are currently learning more about neighborhoods, buildings in neighborhoods, the benefits of cleaning up neighborhoods, and community helpers in neighborhoods. We will be learning the letters Yy and Zz.

Ms. Debi

Kindergarten

Reading: In Kindergarten, our classes will be reading stories about what we see in the sky, how we can help out at home, what good citizens do, and how things in nature can be used to make new things. One celebration is we've made it through the entire alphabet! Many of our students have learned all of the letter names and sounds! While we are reviewing our letters, we are also learning about long vowels and r-blends! There's a lot going on in Kindergarten this month! We are working on becoming narrators: both in reading and in writing. At home, keep practicing those sight words each night! We love seeing the progress that our students are making!

Reading Tip: The next time you and your child read together, see if he or she can locate rhyming words within the story. Then, ask your student to brainstorm an extra rhyming word or two!

Math: We are still knee deep in composing and decomposing numbers to 10. Students should be familiar with number patterns. (Ex. +0, -0, +1, -1, various number combinations to 10, etc.). Each day, we continue to write number sentences and solve multiple word problems. We are finding missing addends and learning how to draw pictures that are associated with our number sentences. This month, we will also introduce and work with teen numbers (10-20).
Math Tip: Have your student find items around the house (or outside) to count: preferably items between 10-20. Have your student organize the items into groups of five or ten (plus whatever "extras" there might be). Then, have your student write down that teen number on a piece of paper, in sand/dirt, with chalk on the sidewalk, etc. We really want to hit home on those tricky teens!

Kindergarten Celebrations in April:

- Friday, April 15th - Kindergarten Field Trip to Topeka Zoo

Ms. Sowell & Mrs. Harmison

1st Grade

Wow, we can't believe it is already April! This year is flying by. We really enjoyed getting to meet with everyone at parent teacher conferences and share how much your students have grown. Thank you

for making the time to collaborate with us.

This month we have lots of exciting things ahead. In reading we are continuing to work on vowel teams, r-controlled vowels and we are introducing diphthongs such as ou, ow, oi and oy. We are also working on our reading comprehension skills by finding the main idea and key details in nonfiction texts and the characters, settings, and events in fiction texts. In writing we have started writing opinion pieces. The students are enjoying this a lot and we have loved hearing their opinions on a variety of questions.

In math, we are finishing up our unit on shapes and telling time. Our next unit focuses on place value, addition and subtraction. We will be adding and subtracting 2 two-digit numbers together. We will also revisit comparing numbers using the greater than and less than symbols.

At the end of this month, we are looking forward to taking our first-grade field trip! On Friday, April 29th we will be going to the Rolling Hills Zoo in Salina. We have been learning all about animals and their habitats so this experience will connect to what we have been learning in science. Please make sure you have returned your child's permission slip.

At home, please continue to read with your student as often as possible. This makes a huge difference in their reading skills! You can also ask them to help you tell the time to give some extra practice. We have learned how to tell time to the hour and half hour. For math they can also practice adding and subtracting 2 two-digit numbers. We appreciate your continued support and everything you do for your kids!

Mrs. Biram and Mrs. Bascue

2nd Grade

We are excited to encourage our 4th grade buddies as they take all their assessments this month. We started with making posters and presenting a cheer for them on April 1st.

There are many skills being introduced in math this quarter as we stated in conferences. Students will be graphing, counting coins and bills, completing money story problems, measurement, fractions, geometry which includes, identifying 2-d and 3-d shapes, shape properties and characteristics, telling time and understanding time. Please take any opportunity you find to show your child how these skills are important in real life. You may also use the packet of math practice we sent home.

The green house is bursting with lots of plants. Most are for our plant sale on April 30th. There are some special projects growing in their as well.

Ms. Witt and Mrs. Ascher

3rd Grade

3rd Grade Wildcat Families,

Wow, fourth quarter is already here! We had such a wonderful time chatting with you all at conferences and celebrating all of the learning we have done this year.

In Reading we've been discussing biographies and by learning about the lives of influential people, we have been able to talk about what makes a good citizen and how we can apply those ideas to our own lives. We practiced with skills such as theme and Author's point of view.

In Math, we finished our work with fractions and started discussing shape attributes, perimeter, and graphing. With state testing coming up, we are also going back to practice skills from earlier in the year to make sure we are prepared to do our best!

As for Science, we still have a few crayfish that are alive and well, but we will soon transition into talking about weather and climate. Our final topic in social studies is geography, so we are excited to learn about the physical aspects of our community, country, and world.

As you know, state testing is right around the corner. The reading test is split between Tuesday, April 5th and Thursday, April 7th and the math test is split between Tuesday, April 12th and Thursday, April 14th. Please make sure your students are in attendance with a good night's rest to ensure they are focused and ready to do their best. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions and thank you for your continued support!

Mr. McCallister and Ms. Staley

4th Grade

We can't believe that we are already so close to the end of the year! The 4th graders are getting into decimals and going to be jumping into geometry. We are reviewing so many of the topics we have learned this year, multi-digit multiplication, conversions, division, and fractions in preparation for the state test. We are continuing our work on story problems and breaking them apart, so it is easier to solve. We also ask you to continue to work on multiplication facts with your student. Multiplication is a foundation that is in most of their math work, if they know their facts it is easier for them to complete their work. Thank you for your help!

In reading we are working on narratives this quarter. We are working in both small group and whole group working on reading skills and strategies such as rereading, cause and effect, main idea, and other strategies. We do ask our kids to apply their learnings to 20-30 minutes of reading each night.

In science we are continuing energy, electrical, potential and kinetic. We are working with magnets and lots of hand on experiments this quarter. We will be getting into sound and sound waves later this year. We have lots of fun experiences in the works!

Thank you for all that you do for us and your students! We couldn't do it without you!

Mr. Hall and Miss Dill

5th Grade

Hello Fifth Grade Families!

We are so pleased with how the second half of the school year has been going, and we are even more excited for what is to come to finish out these kids' final year in elementary school! We have been working hard with understanding how to multiply and divide fractions, understanding volume and finding the area of shapes, as well as plotting our data on different graphs. In reading, we have been learning how to gain a deeper understanding of the text by analyzing the theme, plot, and structure of different stories. Students were able to develop their understanding of the American Revolution through several debates and class discussions on the different causes leading up to the Revolution.

Starting in April, we will be working hard to prepare students for state testing, which takes place throughout April. Please contact your student's teacher for information on how to prepare your student for state testing if you were unable to attend conferences. Aside from state testing, we have a lot of fun things planned, like studying Living Systems in Science and taking a field trip to celebrate the end of state testing!

These 5th-grade students have been working so hard throughout the year, and we wanted to recognize just how willing and motivated they can be when it comes to willingness to learn and be prepared for the challenges in middle school. We hope you are just as proud of them as we are :)

Mrs. Ramos, Ms. Riley, and Mrs. Mackay

S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Hello Westwood Families!

In STEM we have been learning about gravity and conducted a few experiments with our youngest grades. We also have been learning about material properties and purpose by using the material inside of diapers to make artificial snow. With our older grades we have been practicing our wireless computer coding skills with Spheros, EV3's, and Botley's. Our goal is to program and complete an obstacle course with these robots in the coming weeks. Our 4th graders have been participating in the "Body Venture" and have learned about the brain, teeth, mouth, stomach, and small intestines so far.

Mr. Harman

Physical Education

In P.E. this month, we will be completing our skills test at all levels. Those are different for every grade level but include throwing, kicking, catching, striking, and a few other skills. Following that, we will be learning and playing a few outdoor games (ladder ball, cornhole, and kickball).

Mr. Adams



Westwood Elementary

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