

West Elementary, INTEL School of Distinction

On Thursday, November 4, at 6:30pm, West Elementary hosted a "Community Celebration" in honor of its selection as the 2010 Intel School of Distinction in Elementary Mathematics. The event began with an awards ceremony in the gymnasium where it was "standing room only".

Principal Amy Flinn began by welcoming the crowd and introducing the Intel sponsors present, as well as a number of distinguished guests. These guests included Intel Representative, Karen Merrill, SMART Technologies Representative, Eric Bentley, Dell Representative, Ron O'Neal, Blackboard Collaborate Representative, Christopher Twitchell, Kansas Commissioner of Education, Diane DeBacker, Kansas State Board of Education Members, Janet Waugh, Carolyn Wims-Campbell, and Kathy Martin, USD 320 Board Members, Richie Chrest, Dr. Mike Malin, Merlyn Pence, Amy Schwein, Richard Weixelman, and Phillip Wethington, USD 320 Administrators Brenda Page, Vici Jennings, Mark Stephan, Dr. Mary Kaye Siebert, and Doug Conwell, United School Administrators of Kansas Executive Director, Cheryl Semmel, Kansas State Department of Education Math Program Consultant, Dr. Sid Cooley, State Representatives Richard Carlson and Sydney Carlin, Pottawatomie County Commissioner, Corwin Seamans, Wamego City Commissioner, Victor Enns, Kansas State University Professors, Dr. David Allen and Melissa Hancock, Retired Teachers, Donna Goehring, Memory Maginley, and Carolyn Stutzman, Wamego Chamber President, Dwight Faulkner, Wamego Chamber Executive Director, Mary Lynn Barnett, Fort Riley Adopt-A-School Partners, and Captain William Richardson, Sergeant First Class Gerry Goodale, Private Eric Ramirez, Private Justin Richardson.

Following the recognition of these honored guests, Mrs. Flinn thanked parents and community members for their unending support of West Elementary School. She introduced School Board President Richard Weixelman, who provided a few congratulatory remarks to the staff and students of West. Karen Merrill from Intel spoke about the Intel Schools of Distinction program and its importance in the education world, as well as the corporate world. Mrs. Merrill then presented Mrs. Flinn and Mr. Weixelman with the 2010 Intel Schools of Distinction Award.

Immediately following the awards presentation, the students of West Elementary provided a short "thank-you" program for each of the nine sponsors of the Intel SoDA including Intel Corporation, SMART Technologies, Dell, Blackboard Collaborate, BrainWare Safari, DyKnow, SAS, I-CAN, Tabula Digita, and Scantron. Students also thanked parents, staff, School Board, and community members for their contribution to our success as a school. Each classroom was assigned to one of the sponsors or other support groups and made a special presentation thanking the various groups. Students also dressed up in costumes that reflected their career choice for the future. In addition, many students made posters that also represented their career interests. The theme for the night was "Our Future is Bright!" and the Intel award has definitely illuminated the achievements of West and inspired the students and staff to strive for more!

Mrs. Flinn thanked the Site Council for all of their work in decorating and assisting with planning the event. She also thanked all West staff, both past and present, for the time, talents, and energy they



Pictured: L/R USD 320 Superintendent, Doug Conwell, Kansas Commissioner of Education, Diane DeBacker, Kansas State Board of Education Members, Janet Waugh, and Carolyn Wims-Campbell, Executive Director of United School Administrators of Kansas, Cheryl Semmel, and West Elementary Principal, Amy Flinn

have contributed to making West Elementary a place where students and staff thrive and excel. Following the ceremony in the gym, guests enjoyed an Open House and refreshments. Fifth grade students provided tours to our guests and demonstrated some of the technology tools we have in place at West.

West has received \$10,000 in cash from the Intel SoDA, as well as over \$150,000 in hardware, software, professional development, and other services. For more information on the Intel SoDA, go to www.schoolsofdistinction.com.



Students demonstrate the use of new classroom instructional technology in Mrs. McCunes Class.



Mrs. Dows Students thank Intel and other Sponsors for their generosity to West Elementary



5th grade student Rebecca White, dressed in her future career choice, a Pastry Chef, pictured with Intel Rep. Karen Merrill

INTEL Schools of Distinction Award Process

Intel believes all students, everywhere, deserve to have the tools they need to become the next generation of innovators – and that good schools and good teachers are the foundation of student excellence. Intel Schools of Distinction exemplify this excellence.

Every year, Intel honors U.S. schools that have demonstrated excellence in math and science education as Intel Schools of Distinction. One elementary, one middle and one high school in each of two categories – math and science. One of the six winning schools is chosen as the Star Innovator. Winning programs serve as models for schools across the country.

What are the Schools of Distinction Awards?

The Schools of Distinction Award program was established to recognize and reward the unique and diverse ways in which schools can be effective. The program is in its seventh year, and is open to any U.S. K-12 public or private school.

When are the winners named?

The six category winners and the 2010 Star Innovator were named at a black tie gala and award program on September 14, 2010 in Washington, DC.

What are the prizes?

Each school receives a grant of \$10,000 from Intel and a prize package valued at over

\$150,000 in hardware, software Professional development, and services from other sponsors Sponsors for the 2010 SoDA are:

- Blackboard Collaborate - www.blackboard.com/collabrate
- BrainWare Safari - www.MyBrainWare.com
- Dell - www.dell.com/k12
- DyKnow - www.dyknow.com
- I-CAN - www.ican-network.com
- SAS - www.sas.com/cp
- Scantron - www.scantron.com
- SMART Technologies - www.smarttech.com
- Tabula Digita - www.tabuladigita.com

How were the schools judged?

More than 3,000 schools participated in the application process. Applications were judged based on a scoring rubric for each category, which helped identify the winning schools.

What made your school stand out?

Our school district follows the Professional Learning Communities framework for school improvement. PLCs are a way of life for us at West Elementary. Each grade level team meets for 2-3 hours a week of uninterrupted teaming time to develop

curriculum, plan instruction, examine student work, create common assessments, analyze student data, collaborate on team projects, engage in professional development on topics of importance, and much more.

The math curriculum in our district is first and foremost based on the Kansas Standards, as well as the National Math Standards. We spend extensive time researching and studying best practices to ensure that any change initiative is aligned with what has been proven to work. Our philosophy for mathematics instruction is that students should be actively engaged in solving authentic problems in order to develop themselves as mathematical thinkers. A major goal we share is to prepare students to compute accurately, flexibly, and appropriately in all situations. Students apply con-

cepts, skills, and procedures through solving real world problems. We believe in the importance of integrating math and science. Our math curriculum involves quantitative scientific laboratory investigations in every unit. Students use mathematical language as they document and defend their solutions, as well as discuss their various problem-solving strategies.

What obstacles did you overcome to implement this winning program?

Approximately 12 years ago, a "shift in thinking" occurred in our school, primarily because of a change in leadership at both the district and building levels. Our school's scores at that time were lagging and student performance was less than impressive. We initially targeted reading instruction and followed with math instruction. We worked to

develop teacher leaders in both areas and improved the way we provide professional development to our teachers. We began by hiring outside reading and math coaches to work with our teachers on a long-term basis. We also collaborated with professors from surrounding universities to help us facilitate the change process. These coaches provided professional development to all math and reading teachers, modeled best practices, provided follow-up training from classroom observations, and provided individual feedback to teachers to improve their instruction.

Highlight key administrators, teachers and parents that led the effort.

There are many individuals that have contributed to our success

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Featured in November!

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Central Elementary Construction Update

Since my last update concerning the construction project, there has been significant progress. Let me begin with the news that has made additional opportunities available for this project. At the end of September, USD 320 learned that the FEMA shelter grant for which applied last spring had been reviewed and approved by FEMA. The grant provides for 75% of the costs for the construction of the FEMA shelter/multi-purpose room that is part of this project. The overall cost for this space is approximately \$803,892 for which USD 320 will receive funding for \$602,919 from FEMA.

With this news, the USD 320 Board of Education then chose to add four additional items onto this project. First, the BOE approved the addition of an extra per-school



classroom. This will provide the school with 3 pre-school classrooms for future growth. This year we have essentially reached our maximum capacity for pre-school students so the possibility of needing another pre-school classroom needed to be addressed. Second, the BOE committed to doing significant site work on the west side of the building. This is the area where our buses pick up and drop off students. In the afternoon especially, this area is very congested. The site work will provide for a minimum of 8' wide sidewalks the length of the school; two shelters at the north end of the sidewalk for students to have some shelter from the weather; new steps and handicap ramp; and more gathering area at the south end of the school. The third item added to the project is for electronic locking capacity for exterior doors along with the use of a key FOB system. Last, the BOE approved a special paint application to be used to cover the ceramic tile in the hallways.

With the news of the acceptance of the FEMA grant application, construction has actually begun on the new multi-purpose room. Currently, steel reinforced footings and walls are being erected. The targeted completion date for this space is around March 18 assuming the construction crew has good enough weather to get a roof on this portion of the building in the next two months.

The target date for moving in to the new kindergarten/administrative wing is January 3. Plans to turn over portions of the addition actually call for us to begin waxing floors the week of December 6

being turned over to us over a 10 day period. At this time all interior walls for the classrooms and the office space have been erected. The block walls are painted. Ceiling grid is now being installed in classrooms and electrical wiring is being pulled to classrooms as well. The new roof is in place with some minor work that needs to be completed where the new wall meets the older portion of the school.

Site work is underway with the new steps and handicap access ramp to the entrance of the school having been completed the week of November 1. The retaining wall on the south and east sides of the school has been built and the limestone fascia has been placed on both the south and east sides of the school. All exit steps have been poured for classrooms on the north side of the school. Presently work is being done so that the new sidewalk and parking spaces on the east and south sides of the school can be poured the week of November 8.

Over the past few months the new roof had been installed on the renovated portion of the school. Additionally, cuts in the wall have been made for passageways in the gym and in the current kitchen space. The new fresh air system has been installed is now operational.

Our plan is to move into the new wing during the month of December. New furniture is ordered and should be delivered around the time we are ready to make the move. It is my hope that our teachers can begin to move items that need to be in storage cabinets beginning December 15. The office will be relocated over the Christmas break. This means that all of the new computer network, telephone system, fire alarm system and intercom system will be up and running by January 3. Needless to say, our tech department and our custodial department will be very busy in December.



When students return to school, we will have isolated the former kindergarten classrooms in the south portion of the current school so that work can begin in these spaces. The two kindergarten classrooms on the north side of the hall will become special education classrooms. The three classroom on the south side of the hall will become a new computer lab and the new library. Work in these areas will be done during the second semester.

As you can see, a lot has been accomplished in the past three months. Plans have been made to continue the project with the ultimate goal being to have this construction project completed by August of 2011.

Donation Brings New Outdoor Science Classroom to WMS

By Vici Jennings, WMS Principal
Thanks to a generous donation from Mr. Ben Foltz, Wamego Middle School is moving forward in the establishment of an outdoor classroom to the west of the middle school building. After dreaming about, researching, and planning for the establishment of the classroom, it is certainly exciting to begin the process.

Mr. Foltz donated his \$2500 award from the Monsanto America's Farms Grow Communities program to USD 320, and Superintendent Doug Conwell has designated the award as seed money for the establishment of the outdoor classroom, benefiting all students at WMS. Science teacher Shane Neel has taken the lead in this project, preparing himself through participation in Prairies Across Kansas and the STEM initiative from Kansas State University, as well as partnering with the KSU geology department to test

new geology software. The outdoor classroom will be phased in over a series of projects. The first phase will include a controlled burn of the site, establishment of the walking/fitness trail and the placement of the research plots. By summer 2011, a water management system will be installed in the existing pond area. By the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, students will be participating in planting of trees and shrubs for wildlife habitat and wildflower/grass seed dispersals. As the project develops, the plans include establishment of a greenhouse, school compost system and a school/community garden. All of the funding for the two-three year project will be earned grants and gifts. Science is not the only curriculum that will be able to benefit from the outdoor classroom. Physical education classes will be using the walking/running trail, as well as proposed circuit

training stops. Woods classes could very well be part of the development of these circuit training instruction boards and the installation. As more and more data is collected, math skills will be employed. Additionally, there will be plenty of opportunity for students to donate volunteer hours through school and community organizations.

We are pleased to have assembled an excellent project committee: Shane Neel, seventh grade Science teacher and project leader; Brad Bowser, sixth grade Science teacher; Tom Wilson, eighth grade Science teacher; John Schmidt, physical education teacher; Corey Alderson, Wildlife Biologist KDWP; Dr. Matt Totten, KSU Geology Associate Professor; Jeff Neel, Blue Earth LLC; Valerie Wright, Environmental Educator and Naturalist; and Vici Jennings, Principal.

Wamego High School Theatre to Present Auntie Mame



The stage at Wamego High School isn't much to look at right now, but in just a few short weeks, it will be transformed into the world of everyone's favorite relative, Auntie Mame. In the show, we meet Mame Dennis, played by senior Alicia Kilian. Mame is a sparkling, scatterbrained and warm-hearted woman who has the fortune of raising her nephew, Patrick, played by both Noah and Conner McManus. Through Mame, we learn lessons about facing hardships head-on, accepting others as they are, and creating a true family out of those who are around us.

The show is filled with memorable characters and hilarious moments. It's a laugh-out-loud comedy that will leave you feeling refreshed and ready to LIVE your life. Please plan to make Auntie Mame part of your family on November 12 and 13, at 7:30 P.M., or during a special matinee show, Sunday, November 14, at 2:00 P.M. Ticket prices are \$4 for adults and \$3 for students and are available at the door.

The Wamego High School Debate and Forensics teams will be hosting dinner before the show. The menu will include Chicken Fettuccine Alfredo, salad, garlic bread, dessert, and a beverage. Tickets for dinner and the show are \$10 each and need to be purchased by Tuesday, November 9. Those tickets can be purchased from any cast or crew member, or you can contact Jennifer Topliff at 785-456-2214 or topliffj@usd320.com.

The cast includes: Alicia Kilian, Sertrice Grice, Noah McManus, Conner McManus, Hannah Conroy-Philbrook, Shin Han, Steven Fox, Micah Klein, Andrew Shermoen, Hannah Pierce, Chris Alexander, Nick Webb, Josh Nieder, Sean Parrish, Luke Hannan, Clay Massingill, Britta Seljestad, Dexter Walsh, Taylor Roberts, Katelyn Landers, Maranda Hale, Michaela Sievers, and Wes Gately. Crew members are: Cat Wethington, Molly Delay, Britta Seljestad, Monica Devora, Laura Furney, Beth Huddleston, Amy McMillan, Wes Gately, Victoria Busch, Emily Mullins, Alex Clutter, Sean Parrish. The show is directed by T-Shane Roberts and assisted by Jennifer Topliff.



For Your Child: We Will Do Whatever It Takes!

By Mary Kay Siebert, Ph.D., Director of Instruction

One of the most exciting developments in our school district is the simple, but powerful concept of the three important letters: **PLC - Professional Learning Community**. Rick DuFour, well known presenter and author of many books and articles on PLCs, says that the "most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is the capacity of school personnel to function as a PLC." All of our schools in USD 320 have embraced the PLC model for school improvement, and I can safely say that if there is anything the educational research community agrees on, it is the potential for PLCs to build cultures of excellence in our schools. The first and most significant guiding principle of a PLC is that the purpose of any school is to ensure high levels of learning for ALL students. The key to being able to function as a PLC school is the development of high functioning teams of teachers in schools, where collaboration is embedded into routine practices, and time for collaboration is strategically built into the school day and school calendar. In a PLC culture, we acknowledge the importance of focusing our collective efforts on student learning; in doing this we create team norms that create environments of collective inquiry and transparency with regard to the content and skills taught in our classrooms, and the strategies used to create opportunities for student learning and success.

Team collaboration is not the same thing as collegiality. Working with others in an atmosphere of friendliness, sharing and respect is important to be sure; however, this is not collaboration. Collaboration is difficult work and it involves the willingness to be honest with each other, transparent in our intentions, and most importantly, be willing to put in the tie to practice this hard work, and be accountable to those we work with in teams. Team collaboration is effective when it focuses on the critical questions of learning, leads to change in classroom practice and teaching, increases teams' abilities to achieve goals, and helps individual teachers become more effective so that all students learn at high levels. All educators in our school district understand deeply that in order to make great things happen for all students in a school/district, the culture of the organization must be one where all commit to the importance of working together to achieve their collective purpose. This is referred to as a "collaborative culture". So then, the use of the word "culture" is not just a rhetorical term for those working in a true PLC. In a true PLC culture, there is unwavering support

for the big idea that collaboration is critical for us to do our best work for students-your children.

The terms "culture" and "collaboration" often have different meanings to individuals. But put very simply, the culture of a school/district is essentially "the way we do things around here." Culture cannot be found in mission statements or strategic planning documents, but instead is found in the day to day behaviors, attitudes and deeply held beliefs of all individuals and groups that make up an organization. Culture is also reflected in the policies and procedures that guide that organization.

Our teachers who work in true PLCs often talk about the term "collaboration". Collaboration is not the same as congeniality, and the difference between the two is worth noting here. Working with others in an atmosphere of friendliness, sharing and respect is important to be sure; however, this is not collaboration. Collaboration is difficult work and it absolutely involves the willingness to be honest with each other, transparent in our intentions, and most importantly, be willing to put in the time to practice this hard work, and be accountable to those we work with in teams.

One of the most enduring concepts embraced in PLC schools is that the focus of our collective efforts must be on learning, not teaching. Teachers in our PLC schools focus their efforts on learning (in their PLC teams) in a number of significant ways: developing SMART (strategic, measurable, attainable, results-bound, and time-bound) goals that focus on areas for student improvement, developing common assessments and evaluating students' results as teams of teachers. A central component of our PLCs is that time be allowed within the school day for teams to come together to analyze and improve their classroom practice, and engage in ongoing cycles of questions that promote team learning. The PLC teams in our schools are required to make those goals

(including strategies, questions, concerns and results) public, with the discussions in those teams carefully structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers, both individually and collectively. This is, in essence, the epitome of best practices when it comes to professional development.

The emphasis in a PLC then is on learning. While this may seem pretty common sense, obvious, and maybe cliché, a true PLC culture consists of teachers and administrators that take this statement very seriously, and pledge to do "whatever it takes" to ensure success for all students-your children! This "whatever it takes" philosophy is embedded into the everyday work of all school personnel in a PLC school. Furthermore, the pledge to ensure learning for all is reflected in the collective commitments that have been agreed upon in all schools. These commitments are then exemplified in the behaviors and actions of adults and children alike.

In order to ensure that there will be learning for all in our PLC schools, all educators must consider four critical questions, if we indeed believe that all kids can learn: 1) What is it we expect them to learn?, 2) How will we know when they have learned it?, 3) How will we respond when they don't learn?, and 4) How will we respond when they already know it? How questions answer the last two questions differentiates schools that operate as true PLCs and those that do not.

"What do we want each student to learn?" Knowing what it is that we want our students to learn is perhaps one of the most challenging tasks of any educator. Our curriculum maps, with links to the standards for our state, provide us with guidance here. But even with agreed upon curriculum maps and guides in place, teachers must continually have conversations with each other in their PLC teams,

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COMPUTER CONNECTION

Stay in touch with USD 320!
www.usd320.com

Visit our web site for up-to-date calendars, teachers, board members, administration and school information.

The Importance of Attendance

By Brenda Page, Principal
Central Elementary
Central Elementary is a busy time in the fall, but especially this fall with all the changes. One thing remains, regular school attendance is crucial to the development and education of children.
As a child learns to read and acquires basic math skills, it is important that he practice those new skills daily. Each day, new learning opportunities are presented in our classrooms and regular attendance assures that your child does not miss out on these opportunities.
In addition, children begin to

learn how to socialize with others, follow directions and solve problems creatively in school. If a child is not part of the classroom, some of these social skills cannot be practiced.
Even as early as preschool and kindergarten, parents and community members may not fully understand how early learning curriculum has changed in recent years. Kindergarten-ers are learning to read so each day is extremely important in receiving the necessary instruction for each step toward that goal.
Students with excellent attendance during their early school

years perform better in upper grade levels.
Fortunately for most students at Central, this is not a problem. Parents are committed in getting their child to school each day. As attendance is checked and monitored throughout the school year, letters are sent out periodically to inform parents if their child has missed over 10 days of school. As with building any kind of a system, having regular attendance during the elementary years create a strong foundation for future learning and wonderful possibility for maximum academic and social growth.

Wamego Christmas Bureau Seeks Families in Need

This year with be especially difficult for many to provide a Merry Christmas. Wamego Christmas Bureau is already in action and we NEED families to apply EARLY so matches can be made. It takes a lot of courage to request assistance and not all needs can be met. A meal, basic needs and gifts for the children will be provided through adoption. You will also be giving a gift in return by allowing someone to feel the warmth of giving within their heart.
We also need adopters and donations. For those able to make a contribution, PLEASE do so enabling Wamego's Christmas Bureau's tradition of PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE to continue. Your gift may take many forms: adoption, a monetary contribution, a gift for a child, needed supplies, canned goods or helping load and unload.
Wamego Christmas Bureau covers USD 320 boundaries and matches families requesting assistance with families, organizations, businesses, and/or persons. 2010 application dates are November 10th through December 8th. To request adoption, for more information, to adopt or to contribute, contact the Christmas Bureau hotline at 456-7495, or email christmasbureau@wamego.net, or ANY church, the local Library, Three Rivers, Community Health Ministries, or NEK-CAP.
The 2010 Wamego Christmas Bureau received a generous gift of a three story doll house. Donations for a chance to win this beautiful house will benefit many. Call the hotline for more information or chance locations.
PLEASE reach deep within your heart this year and remember the best present is the gift of giving, for both the receiver and the giver.

For Your Child, Con't from page

with regard to how that curriculum fits with the students in their classrooms. They must ask themselves the question "which standards are critical (need to know) and which are not critical (nice to know)". Educator and researcher Doug Reeves specifies three criteria to help educators determine which standards deserve a higher priority: endurance, leverage, and necessity for the next level of instruction.
* **Endurance**-Does the standard address knowledge and skills that will endure throughout a student's academic career and professional life?
* **Leverage**-Does it address knowledge and skills that will be of value in multiple content areas?
* **Necessity**- Does it provide the essential knowledge and skills that students need to succeed in the next grade level? Thinking about our curriculum through these three lenses can help us become clearer about what it is that students must learn in our classrooms and grade levels.
"How will we know when each student has learned it"? We know that we cannot wait until the end of a unit, a semester or a year to answer this question. Therefore, we must study the power of formative assessments (assessments for learning) as diagnostic progress-monitoring tools used to adjust

teaching and learning while they are still occurring. Creating formative assessments in our PLC teams and using them to monitor progress in our classrooms can help us address the third question.
"How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?" Herin is the ultimate challenge that every teacher/administrator faces regularly. What do we do when a student meets difficulty learning what is needed to be learned? In other words, what do we do when our students haven't learned what we deem critical? There are no easy answers to this question, however, when teachers work together in high functioning teams, to share what works in their classrooms, use common formative assessments, and analyze data related to student learning, the answers surface more readily. We know that the collective intelligence that is created in collaborative teams is almost always greater than what we have available to us when we attempt to go solo. In addition to working together with colleagues, strategies are designed in our schools to ensure that struggling students receive the time and support they need, no matter who their teacher is. We know that a PLC's response to such students needs to be systematic and school-wide; it

needs to be timely, based on research based interventions, rather than remediation, and directive, not voluntary.
"How will we respond when students already have learned it"? This question calls us to think beyond the curriculum per se, and create meaningful learning opportunities for those students who need additional challenge in the classroom. It's worth repeating here that the answers to the third and fourth questions discussed in this article separate learning communities from traditional schools, according to Rick DuFour.
In creating schools that are true PLCs, we must continually strive to examine our own stories we tell ourselves in schools. This involves being open to new ways of going about our work and possessing the willingness to examine current practices in order to improve. The challenges are significant, however, the potential for gains in student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and both student and teacher efficacy in the classroom is great. Note: If you are interested in learning more information about professional learning communities in your child's school, please contact either the building principal of the school, or myself.



Sounds of Christmas at WHS



Wamego High Music Program Presents
Feast of Carols/Chili Feed
December 6, 2010
5pm Cilli Feed (Commons Area)
7pm Concert (Auditorium)

Advanced tickets \$4 and \$3 ¹² (and Under)
At the Door \$6 and \$5
Concert Tickets only \$2

For further information contact Music Booster Representative
Frances Martinez at 456-7473

Kansas State University Receives Award

The University Professional and Continuing Education Association has awarded Project EXCELL (The Extended College Education for Lifelong Learning) an Association Central Region Innovative Program Award. The Academic advising certificate program won the same Associations Central Region Mature Credit Program Award.
Project EXCELL is a program offering five week, on campus classes to persons age 18 and older who have mild developmental disabilities or other cognitive disabilities that might prevent them from experiencing college life. It is a program that has already enriched the lives of many individuals and their families permitting an active university experience.
The 15 credit academic advising certification program is a collaborative effort of the department of special education, counseling and student affairs; the College of Education; the Division of Continuing Education and the National Academic Advising Association. The award emphasizes the importance of academic advise to students and the resulting postsecondary retention and success.
Kansas State University was the first in the Nation to offer a professional development program for academic advisors, the success of this program, created in 2003, is validated by K-States inclusion of a full Masters program in academic advising in 2008.
These programs and the partnerships developing them are oriented toward providing supplemental transition services for high school developmentally delayed students 18 and older, and those students 18 and over that have dropped out of school and are unable to find jobs. These programs will provide these young adults unique opportunities on the campus of Kansas State University. USD 320 in Wamego is pleased to be involved in these efforts

National FFA Convention 2010



By Chapter Secretary Kaylee Pittenger
Recently the Wamego Chapter FFA attended the 83rd National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. This convention brings FFA members from around the United States, including Puerto Rico and The Virgin Islands. At the convention this year there were over 55,000 FFA members, advisors, and supporters out of the over 520,000 members in FFA. This years National Convention's theme was Infinite Potential. All these FFA members and more went there to explore the many opportunities available to today's agriculture students, and learn how to discover their own Infinite Potential. Other than going to the Convention and hanging out with other chapters we were able to participate in general sessions, competitive events, educational tours, leadership workshops, a career show and expo, and volunteer activities.
Some of the tours included Hummert International of St. Louis and the Fair Oaks Dairy Farm in Indiana. This Dairy is spread over 19,000 acres and milks over 30,000 head of mostly Holstein Dairy Cattle. At Hummert International, one of the owners spoke to the students and told them about his business and taught the students about the Horticulture Field in Agriculture. After

they gave us a little presentation, they also gave us a tour of their warehouse and showed us a little about how they run things in the St. Louis location.



The ten students from Wamego that attended were, Kyle Zerbe, Cole Woodworth, Kaylee Pittenger, Ryan Pachta, Kevin Zerbe, Jenni Rutchmann, Broderic Peddicord, Brook Boatwright, Jacob Dietrich, and Paul Hartwich. All ten students had great time and can't wait to go back again and participate in all the fun events.

Once in Indianapolis we went to Conesco Fieldhouse for the first opening session of the FFA National Convention. We also heard from Dr. Larry D. Case, the National FFA Advisor for the past 24 years. This was to be his last National Convention as he is retiring from his position. At each session there is a keynote speaker, and at this session it was Josh Shipp. He claims that he isn't a motivational speaker but he is a positive speaker. It was really great seeing him at National Convention. We enjoyed listening to Josh Shipp, Dr. Larry D. Case, and the National Officers speak.

USD 320 Foundation

By Doug Conwell, Superintendent
Last year the USD 320 Board of Education gave approval for the establishment of a district foundation. The purpose of this foundation is to provide giving opportunities to alumni, parents and patrons to support USD 320 education programs and technology enhancements. The USD 320 Foundation is actually offered through the Wamego Community Foundation. Charitable contributions are tax deductible and individuals can name the purpose for their respective donation.
As most people know by now, public education has experienced significant budget reductions over the past two years. The possibility of more cuts in school funding is very real with the federal stimulus money set to expire at the end of the 2010-11 school year. The establishment of a district foundation is one means by which people can assist the district to minimize the loss of programs, activities, and/or to help with new technology initiatives. For example, a person who wants to support

the district art program can donate money for such a purpose with the assurance the donation will be spent on this specific program.
One initiative that USD 320 is always looking to expand upon is that of the use of new technology. Recently the district has started to install Promethean Board teacher presentation systems in classrooms. These are media and computer integrated whiteboards designed to help teachers to interact more effectively with students. To date, 24 classrooms/computer labs have Promethean systems installed in district at primarily Central Elementary, Wamego Middle School, and Wamego High School. Another 13 to 15 are planned for installation through this year with the construction project at Central Elementary School. We still have another 45 classrooms minimum for which we would like to install these systems throughout the district.
The school district has discussed a computer per student initiatives for our secondary schools. Additionally, the dis-

trict is interested in moving to more wireless capacity in all schools which would greatly enhance any one-to-one initiative that we might start. Adding to our collection of instruction specific software would allow more of our teachers to provide for higher order thinking opportunities for students. Training our staff members on the integration of technology into their teaching is equally important to our technology goals. More and more, our district has come to embrace the use of technology as a means by which we can enhance student engagement in the classroom.
As you can see, the need for the development of a Foundation is significant. Continuing to count on state and federal revenues for providing for the needs of our students is somewhat suspect, yet the stakes for our children having a quality education have never been higher. To find out more about the USD 320 Foundation and learn how you can give to help our children, please visit our district at www.usd320.com.

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings -Carl Jung

Infant Toddler Services Participates in International Conference

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood (DEC) held their 26th annual international conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families in Kansas City, Oct. 14-17, 2010. The Pottawatomie/Wabunsee Infant Toddler Services team was fortunate to have the opportunity to be involved in the planning and participation of this incredible professional development opportunity. Peggy Miksch, part-time ECSE with our program, and Carol Ayres, KSDE, did an excellent job as our state chairpersons, involved from the beginning in all aspects of planning and implementation of the conference. Also serving in volunteer roles were Anna Nippert, Kelley Brummett and Para Roberts. Tami Litney and Mike Bilderback were also in attendance at the conference, as well as two family members from a family currently enrolled in Infant Toddler services. Costs associated with the conference were paid for by Infant Toddler

ARRA funds. The Annual International DEC Conference boasts speakers from around the globe who are engaged in cutting edge research and implementation of education practices for fami-



lies and young children with exceptionalities. The evidence based practices in the early intervention field is rapidly expanding, altering the way that services are delivered to families and young children with all exceptionalities and needs. As teachers, therapists, administrators and parents, we are all charged with the responsibility to seek new information, challenge our cur-

rent perceptions, and modify our services as we strive for the best possible outcomes for the children and families we serve. This conference provided an engaging venue for staff to stay current on practices and refrain from becoming stagnant. Session topics included the use of Informed Opinion in EI eligibility; service provision in natural environments; evidence-based literacy programs for children birth-six; importance of and intervention of parent-child interactions and parent responsiveness; play-based interventions for children with autism; and many more. Handouts from session will soon be made available at : http://www.dec-spced.org/Conference/Handouts_from_2010. I encourage you to learn more about DEC at www.dec-spced.org and the Council for Exceptional Children at www.cec-spced.org. For more information about Infant Toddler Services, please contact Anna at 456-7366 or nipperta@usd320.com

High School Road Trip to Manhattan Technical College



Nine Wamego High School students attended the Manhattan Area Technical College Open House on Thursday, Oct. 21. Students included Keaton Beachler, Tanner Boggs, Jacob Brown, Chance Callaway, Kohlen Davis, Bryant Gober, Daniel Jensen, Ashley Maikie, and Michael Moorman. They were accompanied by Jina

Kugler, counselor and Bob McConnell, transition coordinator. Students range in age from sophomores to seniors and learned about programs including business accounting, automotive technology and collision repair, welding, electric power, nursing, dental hygiene, computer-aided drafting, and building trades. In addition to getting information about career training and touring the campus, highlights of the day included rides in the electric power bucket trucks and riding the large teeter totter in the welding department. Students were also able to sign up for a scholarship drawing. Manhattan Area Technical College offers certificate programs that can be completed in 9-12 months as well as two-year associate degree options for their programs. In addition to those the students visited, MATC also offers training in air conditioning and refrigeration, advanced applied laboratory technician, business administration, information and network technology, medical laboratory technician, and work-force development. Some pro-

grams have waiting lists or selective admission, so it is to a student's advantage to get information as early as possible in their high school career. More information is available in the



Pictured: Current WHS student, Ashley Maikie, who will attend MATC to study business, and 2008 WHS graduate (Lisa Friederich) who currently attends MATC studying business.

high school guidance office or online at www.matc.net



Pictured: Daniel Jensen and Colton Davis get a lift during a field trip to MATC.

Intel Award, Con't from page 1

cess in mathematics instruction. In fact, it would be hard to identify only a few that helped us obtain our current level of performance. We have outstanding teachers across all grade levels that understand the importance of high quality math instruction. We have an administrative team that is committed to hiring the best teachers to deliver instruction and that create opportunities for staff to grow and develop professionally. We have a Board of Education that believes in providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum to students and that provides materials and resources to get the job done. Our Director of Curriculum and Instruction has also been instru-

mental in providing guidance with respect to curriculum revision and implementing math reform. Support from Kansas State University Professors has also made an impact on the change in math practices in Wamego USD 320. We also have extremely supportive and engaged parents in our community. **How has your project made a difference for the school community?** West Elementary School has achieved excellence in math performance for many years now. We attribute our success to several factors. First, teachers are constantly provided with high quality professional devel-

opment to ensure they are implementing best practices in the classroom. We firmly believe that the level of student performance in mathematics is directly related to the quality of instruction provided to them. Second, we provide students with a "guaranteed and viable" curriculum. The adoption of our current math program was a K-12 initiative. This has ensured that the sequence of instruction, instructional strategies, and math vocabulary are consistent across grade levels beginning in Kindergarten. **Fact Sheet**
 • Basic facts about our school
 • Grades 3-5

Wamego High Principal Thoughts

I am writing this article just following the conclusion of the State Cross Country Meet hosted by Wamego High School. This event is a Kansas State High School Activities Association sanctioned event, but after having my first opportunity to witness the planning, preparation, cooperation, and hard work this event takes from so many people in the Wamego School District and the Wamego community I will proclaim this is a Wamego community event. What an awesome sight to see over 775 runners representing 160 different schools across the state converge on the Wamego community for the day. The competition by the runners and the support of their families and friends was an incredible sight. This was all made possible by the cooperative efforts of so very many people under the coordination of WHS Athletic Director, Mark Stephan and Cross Country Coach, Rick Patton. These two men did a fantastic job of coordinating this event and they received so much help from people throughout the Wamego community. For this, I want to say thanks and great job to all. Congratulations also to the WHS girl's and boy's team who each placed 5th in the 4A class, and individually congratulations to Hudson Philip for running a fantastic race and finishing 3rd overall.

To continue with all the great things going on a WHS, State Assessment results are now

official and congratulations to the entire student body and staff for again having outstanding results, achieving Adequate Yearly Progress, (AYP) and achieving the Standard of Excellence in Reading and Science. Many excellent schools across the state do not qualify for these achievements, so we should be very proud that Wamego continues to have high expectation and reach achieve these lofty goals. Teachers and students are already actively preparing for state assessments this year. These assessments covering Reading, Math, Science, and Social Sciences will take place the spring of 2011.

Wamego seniors who are currently ranked in the top ten percent of their class (based on grade point averages at the end of their junior year) were recognized at the Kansas Honors Program banquet at the Manhattan Country Club on Nov. 1. Wamego students honored include Bailey Bettencourt, Brennon Briggs, Mariah Ekart, Sertrice Grice, Sophia Grothe, Laurina Hannan, Abigail Huddleston, Alicia Kilian, Robert McManus, Casey Roberts, and Catherine Wethington. In addition to being recognized at the banquet, students received a hardback and electronic American Heritage Dictionary from the KU alumni association. Congratulations to all of the young ladies and men on this accomplishment. The semester is rapidly com-

ing to a close. Thanksgiving is just around the corner and school is not session Nov. 24-26. As we approach the end of the semester, parents please contact teachers and administration with any questions you may have. We also ask that you encourage your students to finish the semester on a positive note and take care of all academic responsibilities. Finals will take place on Dec. 16, 17, 20, and 21, which will bring the first semester to an end and the beginning of Christmas Break. School will begin in 2011 on January 5, 2011.

Our fall sports have concluded but we will soon be very busy with winter activities. Practice for basketball and wrestling will begin on November 15 with the first basketball and wrestling competition taking place on December 2 and December 4 respectively. Mr. Cook and the Scholars bowl team have also kicked off their season and begin the year hoping to add a 4th consecutive NCKL title to their list of accomplishments. Mrs. Topf and students will present the fall play "Auntie Mame" on November 12, 13, and 14. For a complete list of all activities taking place at Wamego High, please visit our school website at <http://www.usd320.com/HighSchool/default.aspx>.

Please support our students in all that they do and **Go Red Raiders!!!**

"We should indeed promote high levels of learning for every child entrusted to us, not because of legislation or fear of sanctions, but because we have a moral and ethical imperative to do so."

Richard DuFour

Intel Award, Con't

- 310 Students
- 5 sections of each grade level
- Average class size: 21 students
- Other awards or special recognitions our school has received.
- Home of past two Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching winners at the elementary level for Kansas (2006, 2008—award given every other year to an elementary teacher). Home of 2010 state finalist for Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (national title to be announced in May 2011).
- National Distinguished Principal State Finalist for Region 2
- Kansas Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist for Region 2 for 2010
- Published in Kansas magazine for Bullying Prevention efforts
- Host school to many visitors from other school districts wanting to learn more about the effective practices we have in place, specifically in math, reading, and bullying prevention.
- Specifies regarding the Intel School of Distinction Award
- The best way to encourage educational excellence is to identify it, reward it and disseminate the practices that lead to it. That's why each year Intel honors outstanding schools for their dedication to provide quality education to meet the needs of their students. The Intel® Innovation in Education Initiative is sponsoring its 7th year of an awards program for U.S. K-12 schools: the Intel Schools of Distinction Awards.

This awards program honors schools for implementing innovative and replicable programs that support positive educational outcomes. The awards showcase the effective use of technology, the benefits of strong teamwork and the development of excellent classroom teachers. These outstanding programs and practices will then be highlighted so that other schools may replicate the programs.

Six schools were honored in Washington, DC. Each school will receive a grant from the Intel Foundation for \$10,000 and an extensive list of products and services from Intel's supporting sponsors; the "Star Innovator" will receive an additional \$15,000 grant and additional products and services from supporting sponsors.

In order to be considered as an Intel School of Distinction, schools must develop an environment and curricula that meet or exceed benchmarks, including national mathematics and science content standards.

Winning programs serve as models for schools across the country. By replicating proven programs such as these, schools everywhere can reinvent their own math and science programs, inspiring generations of future mathematicians and scientists.

- Indicate how the prizes will further improve your school.
- The grant money provided from the SoDA will allow us to complete a third computer lab for our students in conjunction with other funds we have raised through fundraising efforts. We will also be able to expand the instructional technology provided to students in three classrooms with the addition of three SMART boards. All teachers will have access to three sets of "clickers" (response systems) and a new document camera. We will also be able to expand the instructional software offered to our students, as well as software to help us monitor student use of computers and create an interactive environment in our computer lab.
- All of the Intel Schools of Distinction winners will be sharing innovations around the country and will be used as models of best practice for other school communities trying to achieve excellence.

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