



Friends of Johnston ELP
Supporting the needs of high ability students
in the Johnston Community School District

2021-2022 FJELP Board Members

Mandy Dummermuth
President

SMS, JMS, JHS
mandy.dummermuth@mchsi.com

Lisa Morlock
Vice President
JMS

lisa.morlock@drake.edu

Aihua (Fay) Fei
Treasurer
BCE, JMS

usafay@yahoo.com

Kavitha Kalyanaraman
Assistant Treasurer
JMS

kalyankavitha@gmail.com

Kristin Urness
Database Coordinator
TRE, SMS
baileykr@msn.com

Carolyn Miner
Communications
SMS, JMS, JHS
cmminer321@gmail.com

Hena Guo
New Member Liaison
JMS, JHS
hena_guo@hotmail.com

Binu Abraham
Fundraising
JMS, JHS
babraham999@gmail.com

Jenny Lashier
Past President
ajlashier@gmail.com
BCE, JMS, JHS

Val Thacker
Beloved Historian
valnmatt@msn.com
JHS

Molly McConnell (non-voting)
ELP Coordinator/FJELP Staff Liaison
molly.mcconnell@johnston.k12.ia.us

Friends of Johnston ELP

Fall 2021 Newsletter

...from the desk of
Mandy Dummermuth
FJELP President

Pictured:
Chad, Mandy, and Emma Dummermuth
(Senior/JHSVMB Drum Major)



On behalf of Friends of Johnston Extended Learning Program, I welcome you and invite you to take a deep dive into our Fall 2021 newsletter! I would like to extend a special thank you to the ELP staff and our FJELP Communications Coordinator, Carolyn Miner, for collaborating to share these highlights with you. Many exciting things are happening this year, and I invite you to attend our upcoming Fall Parent Program with Dr. Sally Beisser on Nov 15th at JMS. We encourage you to show support for our district ELP services by joining Friends of Johnston ELP via RevTrak for just \$20 annually. We thank you for your ongoing support and wish you and your student(s) the very best!

Sincerely,
Mandy Dummermuth
Friends of Johnston Extended Learning Program President

2021-2022 ELP Staff

Kristen Hartman	Beaver Creek	515-278-6228 kristen.hartman@johnston.k12.ia.us
Kate Florer	Horizon	515-986-1121 kate.florer@johnston.k12.ia.us
Nikki Paradise-Williams	Lawson & Elementary ELP Coordinator	515-278-0478 nparadise-williams@johnston.k12.ia.us
Kaitlin Koch	Timber Ridge	515-331-4379 kaitlin.koch@johnston.k12.ia.us
Mitzi Hetherton	Wallace	515-278-0476 mhetherton@johnston.k12.ia.us
Colleen Ites	Summit	515-986-0318 colleen.ites@johnston.k12.ia.us
Molly McConnell	JMS & Secondary ELP Coordinator	515-278-0476 molly.mcconnell@johnston.k12.ia.us
Sue Cline	JHS ELP	515-278-0449 sccline@johnston.k12.ia.us

Share ideas for upcoming newsletters, FJELP Facebook page posts, and programs by emailing us at admin@friendsofjohnstonelp.org

ELP Teacher Spotlight

Kristen Hartman

Beaver Creek
ELP Teacher



How long have you been a teacher and how many years at JCSD?

I am starting my 18th year of teaching, all at JCSD. I taught 4th grade for 1 year and 3rd grade for 5 years. I am starting my 12th year as an ELP teacher.

Why do you enjoy working with ELP students?

I love their curiosity and genuine love of learning.

What is one of your favorite ELP activities for students?

I enjoy teaching my students about the power of YET. Many times when they are faced with something challenging for the first time, they will tell me that they can't do it. I teach them to reframe their thinking by saying, "I can't do this YET!" That little word helps students recognize that, while what they are working on isn't easy and that they might make mistakes along the way, they do have the potential to meet the challenge. And when they finally figure it out? It's priceless!

What is one of your favorite books/tv shows/podcast?

I love a good mystery! Two of my favorite books that I read with students are Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett and Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library by Chris Grabenstein. I also enjoy listening to motivational podcasts. Two of my favorites are *Dream Big* with Bob Goff & Friends and *Unlocking Us* with Brene Brown.

What advice do you give to parents of high achieving students?

Keep a sense of humor! Parenting is hard; parenting a high ability child presents its own unique set of challenges. Spend time together learning about their interests and sharing yours. Help your child learn to unwind. Not every minute needs to be scheduled. Kids need time to rest and recharge (adults too!).

Mark Your Calendar for the Fall Parent Program

Monday, November 15th, 7pm - 8:15pm

Johnston Middle School - Media Center/Library

6501 NW 62nd Ave, Johnston, enter Door #21, east side of building



Communication & Parenting Tips for Families of High Ability Students

Our guest presenter will be **Sally Beisser, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor at Drake University**. Dr. Beisser is involved in teacher education, doctoral qualitative research, and service-learning. She has been a public-school teacher of gifted children and professor of gifted education at the college level. Click [HERE](#) for additional information about Dr. Beisser.

All FJELP programs are free and open to the public. Masks encouraged, not required.



Fundraising

Thank you to the parents that gave their Friday evening to help at our FJELP concession stand fundraiser on Friday, October 22nd.

This raised approximately **\$400 for FJELP** that will be given back to ELP programs through grant opportunities.



**WE
APPRECIATE
YOU!**



Stay tuned! Our next fundraiser opportunity will be a “Panera Night.” Save yourself the time of cooking, enjoy a tasty meal AND Panera will contribute \$\$\$ to our organization!

High School ELP News

ELP Class News

The 2021 -22 school year has begun with an eclectic mix of student projects occurring in ELP class. Academic pursuits are well represented, including self-studies of German, Latin, and AP Microeconomics, and prepping for the ACT. Several students are involved in preparation for contests such as National History Day and Academic Decathlon.

In addition to these academic topics, some students are exploring the arts via creative writing , sketching, graphic design and making jewelry. Others are using research skills and creative thought to develop new definitions of intelligence and new ways to organize the public school system. The final type of project involves self-exploration via reading, writing, and reflecting about the process.

Each semester develops into an intellectually stimulating experience for the instructor, watching students pursue their interests and grow as independent learners. This semester is no different, and we all are starting to get anxious to see where the work will lead the students next!

Here We Go



Knowledge Bowl

Two teams represented the high school at Knowledge Bowl Regionals on Thursday, October 21. They earned this opportunity through their strong performance in the qualifying round held earlier in the month.

Team Upsilon included sophomore Peyton Brown and juniors Eshaan Chandani, Catherine Reiher, Sophie Ruddy, and Ani Soni.



Team Omicron included sophomores Riona Butler and Reagan Zierke, junior Riesa Kongshaug, and seniors Aaron Guo and Phoebe Smith.

Team Omicron qualified for the championship round and finished 2nd, historically our best placement ever!

CONGRATULATIONS to BOTH TEAMS

High School ELP News

ELP Alumni in the News

In addition to working with current students, the high school program stays in contact with many alumni who are out at college and/or in the working world. Over the years there have been many opportunities for the "ELP In the News" board to publicize the achievements of our past students, and this semester is no different.



This summer, **Brittany Deal Crow** was awarded a Fellowship from the Iowa Arts Council, enabling her to continue her pursuit of art as a career. Brittany was a vital part of our ELP program, including being part of the creation of our very first Gay-Straight Alliance. She was also a strong member of two State Academic Decathlon teams.

Quotes from the official press release:

Brittany Brooke Crow uses image-making to confront her fear of vulnerability. Her work explores intimacy, ways of seeing, and the expansive possibilities of photo-based art. She considers the performative action necessary to create an image as an inherent part of the content of her work...With support from a project grant, the culminating installation Exhibition(ist) questioned what it meant to see

*and be seen. Crow received a BFA in studio art and a BA in art history from the University of Northern Iowa in 2013. She is currently working out of Mainframe Studios in Des Moines. **Congrats Brittany!***

Facebook recently shared news about alum **Kai Davis**, who is currently a student at Luther. A current ELP student is studying Latin this semester, and this is an opportunity to help grow our students' **network of colleagues!** Kai's family moved before they could graduate from JHS, but it's wonderful to see what he is up to!



Preus Library

3d • 🌐

Interlibrary loan does it again! This is Kai Davis, a Classics major with Linguistics and Music minors, picking up just one part of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum". These six huge books make up only a portion of one volume of the seventeen volume series, which documents a comprehensive collection of ancient Latin inscriptions throughout the entire Roman Empire. The Corpus is continually updated in new editions and supplements, but these books themselves are from 1902, and not to mention they are entirely in Latin! Kai is using these for their Linguistics capstone project, a semester-long research paper and the final required project for Linguistics minors. We wish you good luck with your project, Kai, and hopefully you won't hurt your back lugging these around! @katie.the.gorton @kai_eats

Johnston Middle School ELP News

ELP CLASS

Quarter 1 has ended and students in the ELP elective at JMS are well into their work on their in-depth study projects. Students selected topics based on personal interest and spend the majority of their class time designing and working on their projects. This semester students have chosen a wide range of topic ideas from story writing, to baking, to coding. Students will present their projects at the end of the semester in January.



At the end of September, Ms. McConnell met with all ELP students to go over opportunities that are available at JMS through the ELP program. Students who are not in the ELP elective this semester filled out an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). With the ILP, students have the option to choose to receive regular correspondence with Ms. McConnell through check-ins, contest and academic enrichment opportunities, and social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health. In addition, students could select if they would like to be connected with other ELP students who have similar interests. The ILPs will be in place for the remainder of the semester and will be re-assessed in January.

Mock Trial Teams Purple, Gold, and Dragon qualified for the Middle School Mock Trial State Tournament! **Team Firestorm** had a strong showing as the defense in the run-off cases and just missed qualification.



Congratulations to the following 8th grade students who are moving along to State Mock Trial competition!

Lincoln Miller

James Foo

Paige Lehman

Advik Bajpai

Teddy Hershberger

Derek Hillabolt

Ashlyn Simon

Luka Felbapov

Ritvik Gupta

Akul Gonchigar

Lucy Kiekhaefer

Harrison Burkhardt

Ella Prince

Henry Zou

Summit Middle School ELP

The following 7th grade Summit students will continue their Mock Trial journey as they further craft and refine both the prosecution and defense in the criminal case State of Iowa v. Dana Bayliss, where the defendant has been charged with Murder in the First Degree.

They will be competing again on December 1 and 2, 2021. **Way to go Mockers!!**

Henry Baker

Lucy Minger

Abe Prince

Sophie Amspaugh

Maya Keshwani

Milo Sanderson

Quinnlyn Schulte

Aleena Wiltfang

Ethan MacFarland

David Shi

Congratulations!

Elementary ELP



A snapshot of what is happening in the elementary schools...

- * All kindergarten and 1st grade classes are participating in whole group thinking activities led by the ELP teachers in the classroom
- * 1st grade Fairy Tale unit
- * 1st graders are writing their own ABC book of unique animals to extend their animal adaptation study in the classroom.
- * *Rolling Things* STEM unit focusing on investigating and problem solving how ramp height and vehicle weight affect momentum of cars
- * Chocolate research project to complement reading Who Was Milton Hershey
- * Learning math sites to use back in the classroom, such as freckle math, Khan Academy, mathtop10.com, sumdog.com and Prodigy
- * Problem solving tasks using: Try-A-Tiles, Logic puzzles and Perplexors and CALC cards
- * Playing math games like Sumoku and Head Full of Numbers



- * Reading literature like Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library, Who was Julius Caesar, The Phantom Tollbooth, and My Side of the Mountain
- * Virtual Library Escape following Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library
- * Choice projects to extend literature studies: writing a screenplay from a scene in the book, creating an informational presentation on a scientific concept from the text
- * Studying fables and creating a fable that encompasses all of the elements

Elementary ELP



... and the list continues!

- * Duolingo online program to learn another language
- * CyRide project (tech, elapsed time, map skills, problem solving)
- * Conducting an independent research project on a self-selected topic
- * Dynamath Magazine
- * Number patterns and beginning multiplication problem solving
- * Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) using Gifted Kids Survival Guide, I'm Not Just Gifted, and Who Am I? text and activities

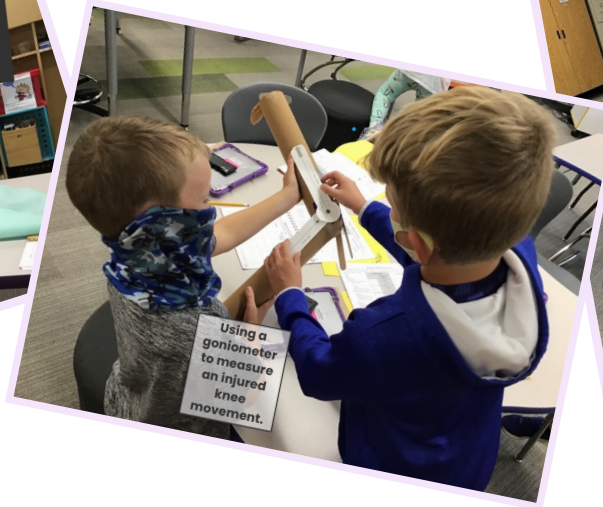
- * Writing personal goals
- * Examining numeration systems and place value in The MoLi Stone unit
- * Mystery genre-reading mystery literature and discovering the elements in the story that make it fit into the mystery genre
- * Biomedical Engineering STEM unit- students are researching and designing knee braces
- * Stock Market Game
- * Preparing for the first Math Olympiad meet in November



- * Stop Motion project - Students learned about the key features of a screenplay and then worked to create their own. Then they used stop motion to animate their screenplay.
- * Some advanced language groups in grades 3-5 are studying Latin words and stems using the Michael Clay Thompson curriculum (vocabulary, grammar, writing)

We have had a busy start the year!

Elementary ELP



5th grade Pecha Kucha Project

Click the links below to see how three students used a 20 picture Google slide show to communicate who they are in photos and images. Students added music and voice to the presentation.

[Strummer](#)

[Harper](#)

[Carlie](#)

Beast Academy– used by grade 2 and 3 STEM

With FJELP funds, the ELP staff was able to purchase and introduce Beast Academy in all buildings for grades 2 and 3 in math. This is a comic book based math program, rich in problem solving and conceptual thinking. The [website](#) states: *“Students regularly tackle tough problems. In doing so, they gain a skill stack that extends far beyond math alone. They gain resilience, creativity, and perseverance that can be used in any field of study.”*

Math Olympiad - used by grade 4 and 5 STEM

Fourth and fifth grade Math Olympiad groups are learning problem solving strategies that will help them be successful on their tests. Some of the early strategies include Think 1, 2-10 Method, Draw a Picture, Sometimes You Must Subtract, and Venn Diagram. **We are tackling the first test early in November!**

Elementary ELP

“I’m Bored!” How Can You Enrich at Home?

We have a remedy for that dreaded phrase! The ELP staff often discovers exciting challenges that we cannot fit into the school day. Here are a few that you can let your child sink his or her teeth into this fall and winter.



The Lyrical Iowa Annual Poetry Competition

*Lyrical Iowa is an annual anthology of 300 or more poems chosen from those submitted to the competitions listed below. Contests are open to all persons with an **Iowa address**; you do not need to be a member of the Association. No entry fee.*

Poems may be submitted by student, teacher or parent. Grades K-4 and 5-8 are judged separately. Prizes are \$15.00, \$10.00 and \$5.00, plus honorable mentions in each section. More info [HERE](#)

Invent Iowa

Invent Iowa, one of the premier programs through the Belin-Blank Center, serves the needs of talented young inventors. The Invent Iowa program encourages students to creatively think and solve problems through the invention process. The program has celebrated the work of thousands of students in grades K-12. These novice inventors, whose inventions range from humane mouse traps and mitten dryers to devices that make life easier for someone with a disability, continue to amaze and inspire us with their inventions. For more information, click [HERE](#)

World Wildlife Federation Classroom

Does your child have a passion for learning about animals? World Wildlife Federation has a fantastic website to learn more about animals and take virtual field trips, as well as arts and crafts. Check out what is available [HERE](#)

Here are some of their fall activities, but check back throughout the year, as they add more:

[Get to know biodiversity:](#) Identify the plants and animals in your community and celebrate the fall season by observing how wildlife is changing around you. You can record the findings in a biodiversity audit and repeat this process next season to compare the results.

[Learn about food waste:](#) Right in time for the season of eating, teach kids about responsible food behaviors that will help the planet with the Food Waste Warrior Toolkit. Then test your knowledge with our **Food & Our Planet** Kahoot! Games.

[Celebrate the season:](#) Feeling inspired by the beautiful shades of autumn? Check out our Wildlife Arts and Crafts page for fun ways kids can express their creativity.

Elementary ELP

The 100 Word Challenge

The 100 Word Challenge is a **FREE** weekly creative writing challenge for children 16 years or younger. Each week a prompt is given, which can be a picture or a series of individual words and the children can use up to 100 words to write a creative piece. The students write a creative piece around 100 words, publish it **on your class blog** then link it to the form on 100wc.net under the correct prompt. The link is usually open from midday on Sundays until midnight the following Saturday.

By setting a limited word count with a focused theme and a guaranteed audience beyond the class teacher, children have far greater motivation for writing. Those who are reluctant writers feel safe with only 100 words to write, whilst those more advanced writers can really extend themselves with the word restriction. Click [HERE](#) for more info!

Future Engineers Challenges

These challenges offer something for all types of learners and creators!

Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

This months challenges are:

- Create a 3D model of a wearable pin that thank Veterans
- Design and experiment to test on a suborbital rocket or high-altitude balloon
- Draw how a rainforest animal may adapt in the future due to climate change



SAVE the DATE

Students and parents will not want to miss
the **January 2022 FJELP program!**



Mark your calendar for **Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7:00pm**
to hear from a panel of **JHS ELP graduates.**

This event will be held in person and Zoom

Our program, *Navigating High School and Preparing for College*, will offer candid advice and perspectives from ELP alumni, currently in attendance at a variety of colleges and universities. **Thank you to Sue Cline** for willingness to coordinate the students and moderate the discussion.

We welcome your ideas for panelist questions!

Please send to admin@friendsofjohnstonelp.org

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Become a **FJELP member and supporter** through a \$20 donation via [Revtrak](#).

These funds are used to provide annual grants to our ELP Teaching Team.

Connect with us!

Attend our
programs and
provide your
feedback!



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