



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

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Friends of Johnston ELP Winter 2022 Newsletter

...from the desk of
Mandy Dummermuth
FJELP President



On behalf of Friends of Johnston Extended Learning Program, I invite you to peruse our Winter 2022 newsletter featuring many recent ELP highlights from across our district. We also invite you to save the date for a fast paced, informative program scheduled for Tuesday, May 3rd!

A recording of our January 6th program, *Navigating High School and Preparing for College: Featuring a Panel of Johnston ELP Graduates*, is now available. We encourage you to like us on Facebook to stay informed on updates and achievements throughout the year, and we wish you and your students the best in 2022!

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

2021-2022 ELP Staff

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General questions for the FJELP board?

Please contact us at admin@friendsofjohnstonelp.org

ELP Teacher Spotlight

Kate Florer

Horizon ELP Teacher

Elementary ELP
Coordinator



2022 marks Mrs. Florer's 19th year of teaching; 15 of those years have been in Johnston. She has taught 1st, 2nd, 4th and ELP.

Why do you enjoy working with ELP students?

I enjoy working with ELP students because there is such a variety of ages and all types of learners. I like challenging students and pushing them to reach new potential.

What is one of your favorite ELP activities for students?

I love the Math Olympiad program. The types of math problems the kids get to work on are so different from the classroom math. These problems really stretch their thinking and force them to try new ways to solve math problems.

What are some of your favorite books?

Thank You, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco & *Mr. Peabody's Apples* by Madonna are wonderful social-emotional learning books for students and adults alike.

What matters to you most in your work?

What matters to me most is making connections and building relationships with students and families. I love to help inspire students to love learning.

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

Have patience! Also, let the students be kids and play as well as encourage them to explore their academic gifts.



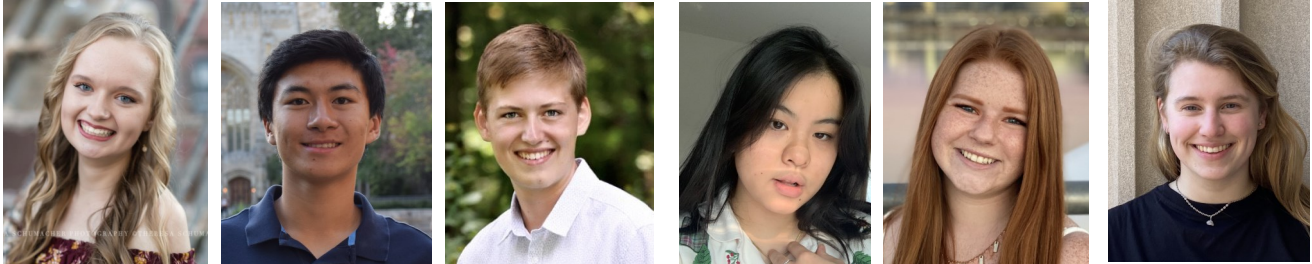
Mrs. Florer and her family

January 6th Former ELP Student Panel

Did you miss this great program?

Navigating High School & Preparing for College

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom Recording



Thank you again to our **INCREDIBLE** collegiate panelists and Mrs. Cline, JHS ELP Teacher, for giving their time to our program!

Save the Date for our Spring Program

**Speed Spotlighting:
Extended Learning Opportunities**

Tuesday, May 3rd
JMS Learning Media Center/Library
A program recording will be available following this in-person event.

PROGRAM AGENDA

7:00pm - 8:00pm
Hear from various speakers who will provide a "speedy" spotlight on a program of their expertise

8:00pm - 8:30pm
Optional Q&A with the presenters



All FJELP programs are free and open to the public.

This is not a Johnston Community School District publication, nor is it in any way endorsed or sponsored by the district.

Summer Enrichment Resources



Summer will be here before we know it! The Elementary ELP team put together a list of resources for summer enrichment activities. View the list [HERE](#).

ELP Funding Updates

Panera Night Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone who supported FJELP night at Panera on February 24th! Our organization will receive 20% of sales from the event. These dollar will support the grant funding opportunities we offer ELP staff each year.

Secondary ELP Program Receives Foundation Grant Donation!

This year the secondary ELP program received a generous grant of \$1000 from the Johnston Foundation. The money was donated to the foundation for the expressed purpose of purchasing materials /resources for the ELP program at the secondary schools. The ELP department has chosen to use the donation to purchase two 3D printers to be used by the 6th - 12th grade ELP students. We are so excited to have the opportunity to use the printers with our students, and we are grateful to the Johnston Foundation for this amazing donation!



High School ELP News

Johnston Repeats as Academic Decathlon Regional Tournament Champion

Johnston's Academic Decathlon teams performed well at the Des Moines Regional tournament on Jan 27-28, and came home with the championship over 12 other teams. Ac Dec challenges students to learn about seven different subject fields, perform two speeches, and be interviewed - quite a task!



This year's theme, [Water in our World](#), led to some significant discussion regarding the geography of water, water usage, and the influence of water in politics, economics, and the arts. The three Johnston teams won a combined total of 47 individual ribbons and a multitude of high scores in the Alternates category as well. Johnston also won five of the nine Overall High Score awards. Individual team results are below.

**Johnston will be represented at State Academic Decathlon, March 5th—6th
by the students marked with an * below.**

TEAM 1: 1st place overall

Honors:

***Adam Ehler:** 1st Literature, 1st Economics, 1st Math, 2nd Science, 3rd Social Science
1st Place Overall for Honors students

***Anna Larson:** 1st Social Science, 2nd Literature, 2nd Math, 3rd Music, 3rd Economics
3rd Place Overall for Honors students

Zach Hodson: 2nd Social Science

Scholastic:

***Elise Henrichsen:** 1st Literature, 1st Art, 1st Social Science, 2nd Economics, 2nd Interview
1st Place Overall for Scholastic students

***Aaron Guo:** 1st Science, 1st Economics, 1st Math, 1st Speech, 2nd Music, 2nd Art, 3rd Social Science
2nd Place Overall for Scholastic students

***Harhaant Dhugga:** 1st Music, 2nd Literature, 2nd Social Science, 3rd Science, 3rd Economics, 3rd Interview
3rd Place Overall for Scholastic students

High School ELP News

Academic Decathlon (continued)

TEAM 2

Honors:

Peyton Brown: 1st Speech

***Ben Cramer**

Reagan Zierke

Scholastic:

***Kristin To:** 1st Art, 2nd Speech

Phoebe Smith: 1st Interview - **Perfect score!**

Joe Cramer: 2nd Social Science

Varsity:

Ryan Majstorovic: 1st Economics, 2nd Math, 2nd Music

Alternates

***Sruthi Vallabhajosyula:** 1st Math, 3rd Economics, 3rd Art, 1st Science

Ava Thornton: 1st Lit, 3rd Economics

Maynor Martinez Verela: 1st Social Science, 2nd Music, 3rd Math

Riona Butler: 1st Economics, 2nd Math, 2nd Social Science

TEAM 3

Honors:

***Dylan Coslin:** 1st Interview

Dima Al-Qaysi: 1st Interview

Caroline Throener

Scholastic:

Jackson Liu: 1st Math

Tyler Barp: 2nd Art



GOOD LUCK to the AC DEC STATE TEAM!

Pictured (L - R)

Back row: Anna Larson, Elise Henrichsen, Kristin To, Fanuel Akakpo

Middle row: Harshaant Dhugga, Dylan Coslin, Adam Ehler, Aaron Guo

Front row: Ben Cramer, Sruthi Vallabhajosyula

Johnston Middle School ELP News

ELP Class

The ELP students at JMS began the semester with a mini-inquiry project. Students were tasked to answer the question:

If you were in charge of our school, what 2 changes would you make?

The purpose of the mini project was to allow students to get a feel for what it would be like to create a project using a structured inquiry-based question. Once students were finished with their research, they presented their responses in a short speech.

Some of the most popular changes our ELP students would make are:

Later school start times

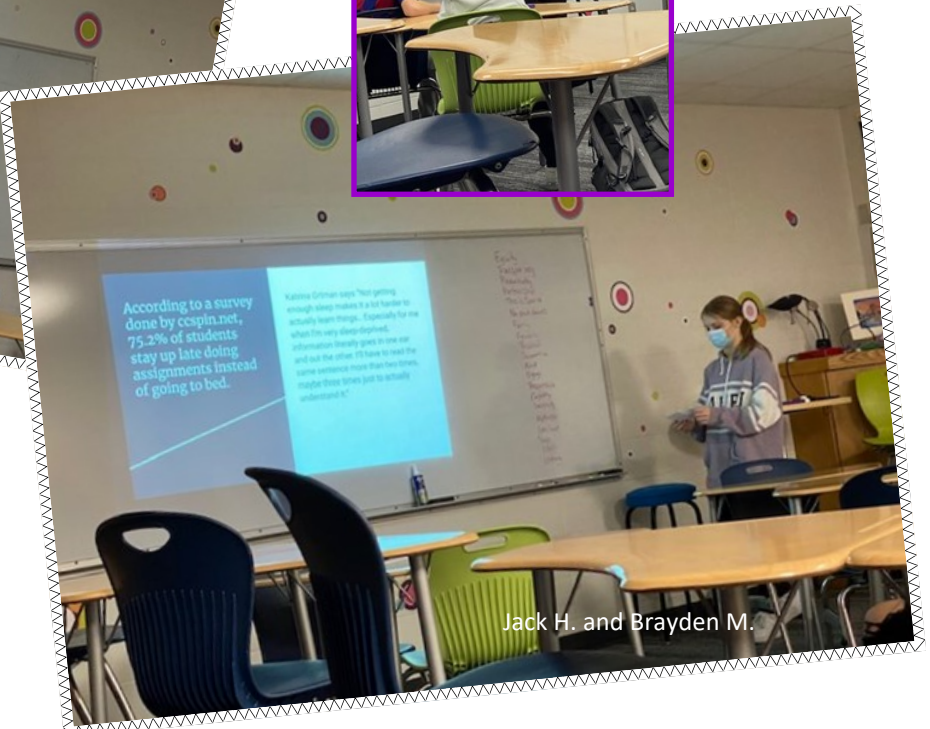
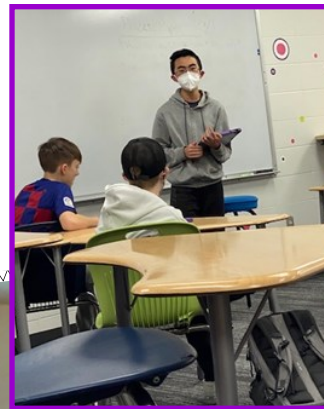
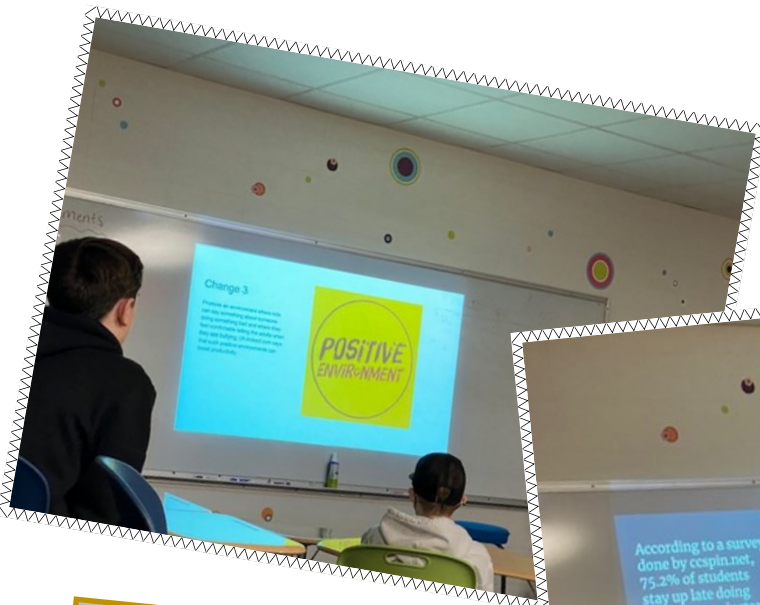
Longer passing periods

Longer lunch times

Greener schools

4 day school week

Recess/In-class brain breaks



Jack H. and Brayden M.

Johnston Middle School ELP News

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Earlier this fall, 3 JMS ELP students entered into the Poetic Power poetry contest. This contest is for students in grades Kindergarten thru 9th grade and is offered 3 times a year. Students are asked to write a poem of their choosing to submit to the contest. Winning poems are published in a printed anthology. **All 3 JMS students' poems were selected for publication! Congratulations to Harrison Burkhardt (8th grade), Ashlyn Simon (8th grade), and Edie Musgrave (9th grade).**



Harrison Burkhardt, Ashlyn Simon, and Edie Musgrave- *Poetic Power Winners*

Congratulations to 9th grade ELP student Aravind Balaji! Aravind spent the fall semester working on an essay for the Know Your Constitution Essay contest, hosted by the Iowa Bar Association. Aravind has been selected as a finalist for the contest. For the contest, students in grades 9-12, must take a 50 question quiz, and then write an essay based on a hypothetical constitutional law related question. The purpose for the Know Your Constitution contest is to stimulate interest and create pride in the U.S. Constitution.

Aravind and Ms. McConnell attended the virtual recognition ceremony on February 15th. The recognition ceremony included keynote messages from Iowa Court of Appeals judge Anuradha Vaitheswaran and Kristen Shaffer, President of the Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division. During the ceremony Aravind was named the Best Essay winner and will receive a \$250 cash prize along with his award.

Well done Aravind!



Aravind Balaji- *Know Your Constitution* contest finalist and **Best Essay Winner!**

Middle School Mock Trial

Congratulations to the Johnston Middle School mock trial teams for a fantastic 2021 season! Four teams competed at the regional competition in November. **Team purple finished the state competition as a semi-finalist and also received the Anthony Critelli award for outstanding conduct and decorum during competition. This award is voted on by all the teams competing at state and is a HUGE HONOR!**

Harrison Burkhardt and **Lucy Kiekhaefer** received outstanding awards for their portrayal as a witness (Harrison) and attorney (Lucy) during the state competition. Many of the other members of the Johnston teams also received honorable mentions for their performances as attorneys and witnesses.



Summit Middle School ELP News

Mrs. Paradise-Williams, Lawson ELP Teacher and Elementary ELP Coordinator, poses with former students during a **Summit ELP Chat & Chew**, where students discuss issues surrounding social & emotional health.



L to R:
Reese Williams,
Mady Ellison,
Ren Hanson (in back),
Audrey Sullivan,
Delia Kilborn,
Mrs. Paradise-Williams,
Elia Brus,
Coraline Miller,
Talía Ohr-Rottler,
Olivia Havig,
and Adalyn Bonert

All ELP STEM students are participating in second semester Summit Strong periods with Ms. Ites.

Sixth grade ELP STEM students are starting the semester learning about the electromagnetic spectrum and how it impacts the ways we interact with our world. Students have created interpretations of how light and color impact the way humans interpret their world through a unit on color-blindness, and have studied the technologies that color-blind persons can use to compensate for their specific forms of color vision deficiency. Students utilized a multi-color light box to view their created works under different colors of light, to better understand all aspects of this process.

These students have continued their work with how art & mathematics combine through research into fractal geometry and its impact on our greater world. Topics students are covering include fractal Interpretations in ancient and modern art, fractal patterns in music, entasis and fractals in architecture, perspective art, tessellations, origami, and kirigami. Students will be creating virtual reality (VR) art showing their understanding of classical (Euclidean) geometry and fractal geometry.

Seventh grade ELP STEM students are covering two units during Summit Strong: Lunar Robotics & Forensic Science. Lunar Robotics student learning includes extensive research into the environment of space and its impact on equipment, how to use robot protocols and engineering challenges to design robots, how to work in mixed engineering groups to establish a lunar robotic base, and how to manage and keep an engineering notebook. The Forensic Science student learning includes new information of genetics, DNA, and RNA, bacterial and virus disease transmission, disease vectoring and public health campaigns, a zombie virus simulation, instruction into inductive and deductive logic structures, application of forensic analysis to archaeology and criminal cases, and the eventual analysis of evidence from a simulated criminal case.

Two seventh grade ELP Humanities students developed a project this year to bring the ARL's Therapets program to Summit as an emotional support for students, and had a successful first visit on February 18. Madelyn Kendall and Grace Samo worked with school counselors and the ARL to bring four therapy dogs and a therapy pigeon for an afternoon visit. Students were given time with the Therapets, the dogs in Ms. Ites' room and the pigeon in the Conference Room. Madelyn and Grace are excited to bring Therapets back to school sometime this spring, and hope to establish a monthly program for Summit students.

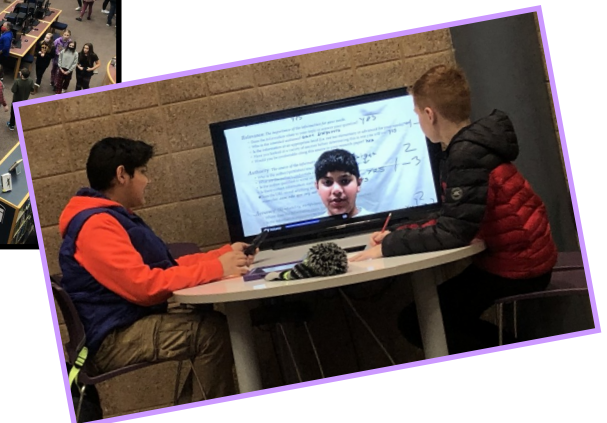
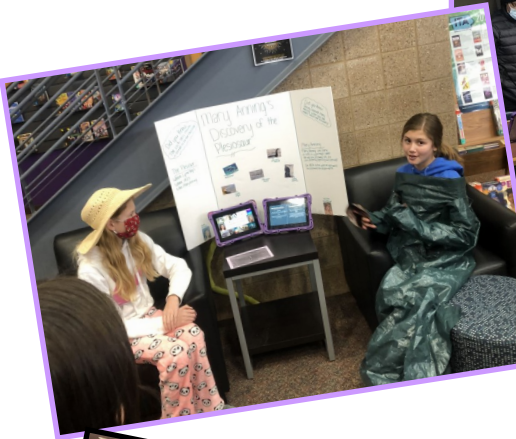
Summit Middle School ELP News

Therapets time!



6th graders Light project

ELP Community Showcase



Elementary ELP News

*There are a variety of things happening at the elementary level across the district.
These are just some of the wonderful learning opportunities in which students have been engaged.
Ask your child about these activities!*

Kindergarten:

- * Activities to develop convergent, divergent, visual, and evaluative thinking skills
- * Try-A-Tiles
- * Beast Academy: Counting, Comparing, Shapes

First grade:

- * Math puzzles and number games
- * Try-A-Tiles, Logic puzzles, Balance Math
- * Activities to develop convergent, divergent, visual, and evaluative thinking skills
- * Working with place value and addition/subtraction with 3-digit numbers
- * Inventors and Inventions Unit: reading and researching (PebbleGo) about inventors, then using information to write a book about them

Second grade:

- * Logic puzzles with coins
- * Word Puzzles and Word Ladders
- * Balance Math- algebraic and deductive reasoning
- * Primary Challenge Math
- * Beast Academy - gifted math curriculum
- * Esti Mysteries (estimation work)
- * Studying wordplay through picture books and *Punished!*
- * Chocolate unit - *History of chocolate & Who was Milton Hershey*

Third grade:

- * Advanced Language Arts unit on Folk Tales
- * Real-world multiplication scenarios
- * Beast Academy - gifted math curriculum
- * STEM unit on Sound Engineering
- * *Escape from Mr. Limoncello's Library*, virtual escape from the Library, creating own rebus puzzles
- * Research project around Greek Mythology
- * Stop-motion animation - working through the writing process to develop a script, then filming *Gifted Kids' Survival Guide*-SIGMA
- * Reading & discussing *Book Scavenger*. Students are enjoying learning about different ciphers and have started to create their own.

Fourth grade:

- * Caesar's English – a study of Latin stems and advanced vocabulary
- * Who Was Julius Caesar - Ancient Rome study and research
- * Reading literature including *Chasing Vermeer*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *The Parker Inheritance*
- * Student-led inquiry into ciphers.
- * Math Olympiads, Problem-Solving strategies
- * Researching and planning a service project to Furry Friends for April.
- * Utilizing Beast Academy, a gifted math curriculum, to study exponents, fractions, and division
- * Debate Unit: incorporating research, writing and presentation/public speaking skills

Fifth grade:

- * Caesar's English – a study of Latin stems and advanced vocabulary
- * Utilizing Beast Academy, a gifted math curriculum, to study integers, ratios & rates
- * Math Olympiads, Stock Market Game
- * Reading various anthologies (*A House Divided*, *Flights of Fantasy*, *Mysterious Circumstances*, *What's So Funny*, *Who Am I?*) and working on accompanying projects
- * Reading primary source documents called Slave Narratives from the Library of Congress.
- * Writing and producing a podcast on a topic area of interest
- * Organized Timber Ridge school wide service project to benefit the ARL
- * Read & discussed *A Wrinkle in Time*. Learned about the archetype of a hero's journey and applied it to a variety of projects they created in response to the book
- * Creating a Pecha Kucha to answer the question, *Who Am I?* A Pecha Kucha is a storytelling format in which a presenter shows 20 slides of chosen images for 20 seconds of commentary each. Since this is a new presentation style for students they are only required to have 10 slides.

Elementary ELP News

If I Were in Charge of the World

Poems by Wallace 3rd graders

By McKenna Sullivan

If I were in charge of the world,
I'd cancel animal abuse (and testing)
I'd cancel traffic, along with bumpy roads.
I'd even cancel overpriced college dorms with apartments.

If I were in charge of the world,
There would be more homeless shelters with food too.
There would be less expensive (or free) schools.
There would even be more animal shelters with more money for animals.

If I were in charge of the world,
You wouldn't have hate.
You wouldn't have allergies.
You wouldn't have bad hair days.
Or, "Well, I like _____. What? YOU DON'T AGREE?"
You wouldn't even fight.

If I were in charge of the world, I would make it a better place by helping others.
And a person who will do the same
And sometimes will make mistakes, but fix them,
Would still be allowed to be
in charge of the world.

By Mae Young

If I were in charge of the world,
I'd cancel bullying.
I'd cancel 5-day school weeks (switch school days with weekends)
I'd even cancel Cocomelon

If I were in charge of the world,
There would be free chocolate fountains.
There would be no money needed ever!
There would even be no smoking allowed ever 'cause it's bad for you.

If I were in charge of the world,
You wouldn't have "No animals allowed" signs
You wouldn't have early bedtimes and alarm clocks.
You wouldn't have broccoli.
Or, "You're too young for that."
You wouldn't even have people who don't like cheese.

If I were in charge of the world, I would stop global warming;
racism would be illegal; and the glass ceiling wouldn't be a thing.
Depression would get immediately taken care of, as well as anxiety, and tiredness would be no more.
And a person who is a girl,
And sometimes farts and sneezes at inappropriate times,
Would still be allowed to be
in charge of the world.

Elementary ELP News

Student Leadership

A group of **Timber Ridge 5th grade** humanities students planned, organized and carried out a school-wide donation drive for the Animal Rescue League of Iowa as part of Timber Ridge's Kindness Week. They also collaborated with PTO to run an activity in which all K-5 students could donate their time during recess to create items for the ARL (blankets, toys, etc.) These students' hard work and planning really paid off! As a building, they were able to collect 709 items and \$139 and create hundreds of additional items to donate to the ARL!

Third and fourth grade students at **Lawson** were asked

What Does it Mean to be Gifted?



Student Voices

Here are some of their answers:

That you are born with some type of talent. - Wyatt

Being different. - Owen

A child born whose brain works differently. Most people who are "gifted" are different. I have much experience. -Hayden

To me, gifted means to have the capability to do more! - Shreya

To me, gifted means that you're very talented in one or more things. - Marcy

I think gifted means having a natural ability - Amishi

You might be a lot different from other kids: work fast, be a good artist, work at a higher grade level than other kids, etc. - Lydia

It means that you are smart, curious and want to know more. - Guthrie

The definition of "gifted" to me means that I'm just a little faster than the rest of my class and my brain catches on quickly to the lesson. - Clara

Being gifted to me means I understand things in different ways. - Emery

To me gifted means having a special skill and using it for good needs. - Grace

Our brains work in a different way. - Colbie

It means that we are special and that we can understand. - Clover

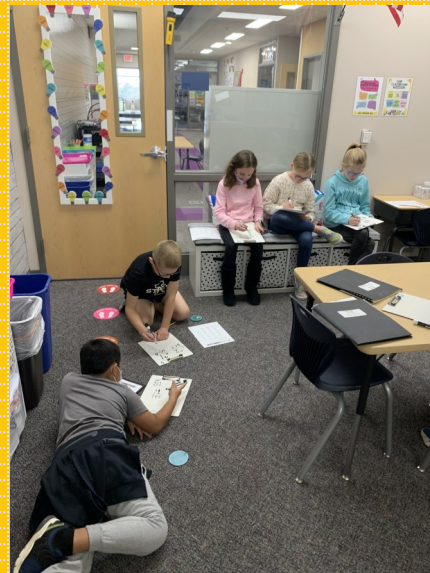
Elementary ELP



BC 4th graders exploring Pentominos



TR 4th graders solving cryptarithms

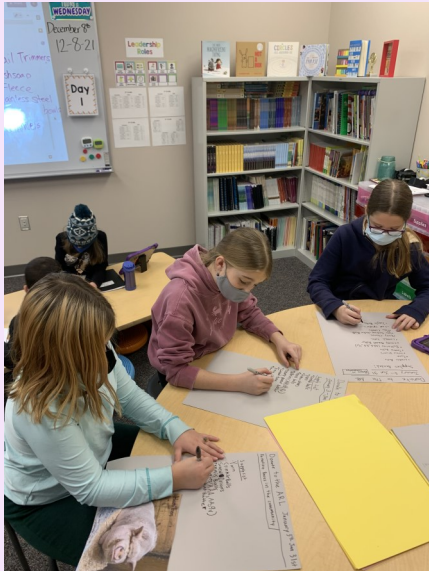


TR 2nd graders working
on logic puzzles



BC 4th graders ALMOST solving it!

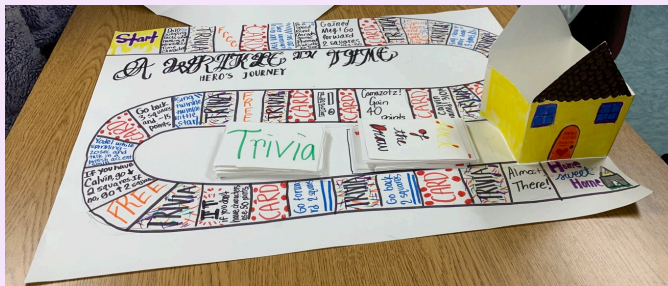
Elementary ELP



TR 5th graders with donations collected

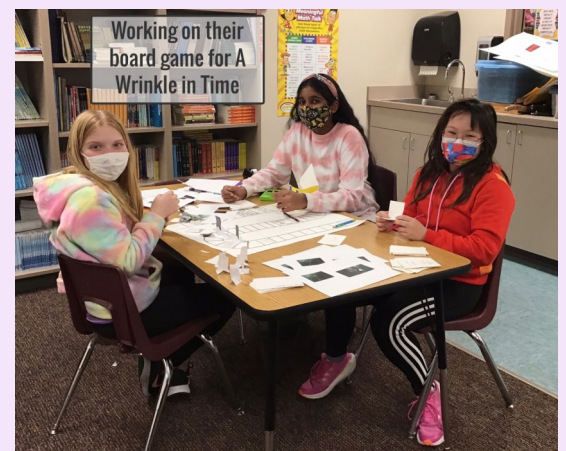
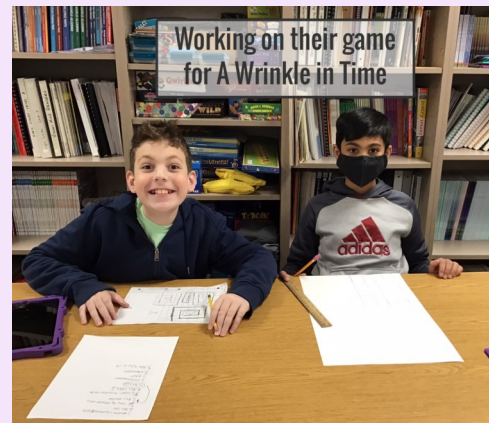
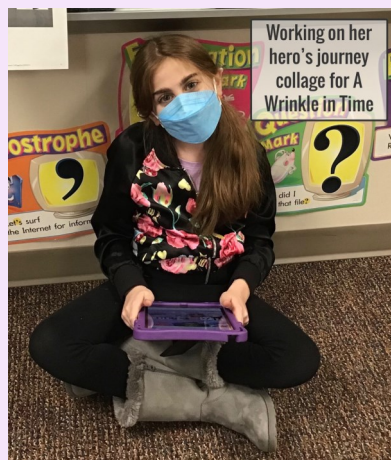
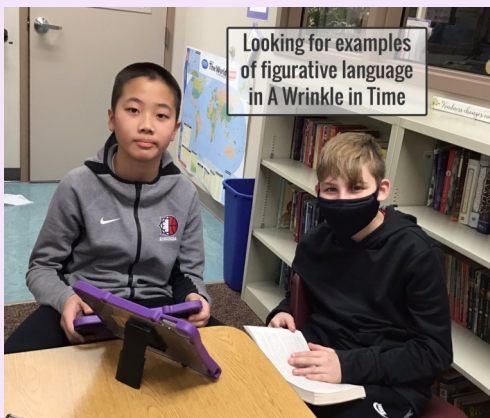


TR 5th graders preparing
for ARL donation drive



BC 5th grade finished game board

***A Wrinkle in Time* projects by BC 5th graders**



Elementary ELP



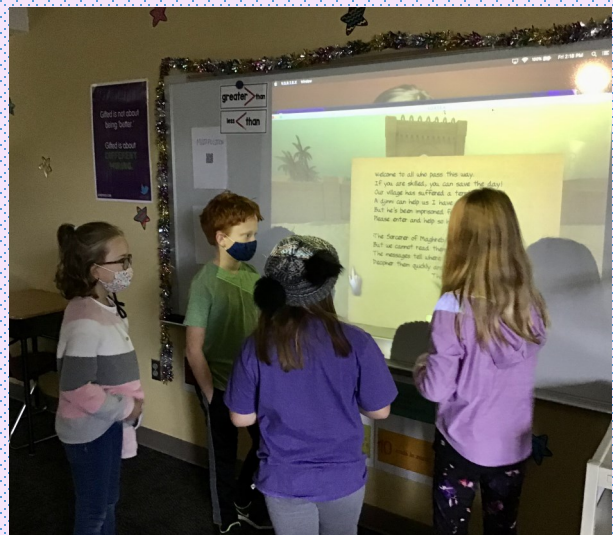
Lawson 4th graders discuss giftedness



Lawson 2nd graders have 'pun' with world play



TR 2nd graders working on logic puzzles



Lawson 4th graders solve ciphered clues



Lawson 5th graders collaborate in STEM

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Friends of Johnston ELP

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

Become **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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