

Monthly Newsletter

WESTSHIRE
ELEMENTARY

October 31, 2024

PRINCIPAL - SARA ROSE

The importance of student-led conferences

Student-led conferences are such an important part of our students' growth and development.

These conferences are more than just a chance for families to hear about classroom progress. They are an opportunity for students to take the lead, reflect on their own learning, and build confidence in sharing their strengths, challenges, and goals with their families.

Why Are Student-Led Conferences Important?

Reflection and Ownership of Learning

When students present their work and discuss their progress, they are asked to reflect on what they've learned and how far they've come. This process encourages them to recognize their achievements and take responsibility for their learning. By talking through their successes and areas for improvement, students develop a deeper understanding of their own strengths and challenges.

Building Confidence

Presenting their work to a trusted audience (like parents or guardians) helps students build communication skills and confidence. It takes courage to share their academic journey, but it also empowers them to believe in their abilities and value their contributions. This confidence extends beyond school and positively impacts their self-esteem.

Instilling Pride in Accomplishments

When students reflect on their progress and discuss what they are most proud of, they develop a sense of pride in their work. Student-Led Conferences highlight not only their academic growth but also their perseverance, effort, and resilience. These moments of pride are invaluable in helping students see themselves as capable learners.

Fostering Stronger Home-School Connections

The conferences provide an opportunity for families to hear directly from their children about their experiences in school. This builds a stronger partnership between home and school, ensuring that everyone is on the same page when it comes to supporting the student's learning journey.

How You Can Support Your Child During the Conference

- **Encourage Reflection:** Ask them to think about what they've learned, what challenges they've faced, and what they're most proud of.
- **Be an Active Listener:** Give your child the space to lead. Listen attentively to their reflections and celebrate their progress.
- **Ask Thoughtful Questions:** Ask questions that help them think critically about their learning. Questions like "What's something new you learned this year?" or "What's one thing you want to improve?" can prompt valuable insights and further reflection.

In this newsletter you can expect:

The Importance of Student-Led Conferences

Bring your Family to School Night

Upcoming Dates

Meet our new staff.

Essential Arts News

Local Happenings and Resources

Student-Led Conferences are a powerful way to support our students' social-emotional and academic growth. By giving them the opportunity to lead, we help them develop skills that go beyond the classroom—skills that will serve them for years to come.

Your students are looking forward to celebrating their hard work, growth, and pride in our upcoming fall conferences. Schedule an appointment with your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Sara Rose



Bring Your Family to School Night

Thank you to all who were able to make it to "Bring Your Family to School" Night! We always appreciate how many people show up to enjoy the night with our students. The pride that flows through the halls never ceases to amaze me!

A special thanks for all who took a moment to vote for our school-wide character traits. Read on to see which traits our whole community decided upon. There were 512 votes cast between staff, students and families. We are excited to see where this "new" Westshire code takes us this year!



November:

- 11/8 Student Led Conferences, no school
- 11/11 Veteran's Day, No School
- 11/14 Harvest Lunch w/Veterans
- 11/21 Beautiful Words Event
- 11/22 Book Giveaway (in school)
- 11/26 Coffee w/Mrs. Rose
- 11/26 School-Wide Turkey Trot
- 11/27-29th Thanksgiving Recess

December:

- 12/9 - 12/11 3-Day Writing Workshop (in school)
- 12/16 - 12/17 Giving Gallery (in school)
- 12/19 - Winter Concert/Polar Express Night
- 12/23 - 1/1 Holiday Break - No School



Beautiful Words Night

Did you know that Westshire is writing a book this year! As part of the CLiF grant, we have chosen "literacy dollars" as one of our perks. We will work together to write a book around one theme and plan to get the book published!

We want to kick off this writing journey with all of your on Thursday, November 21st! Join us for "Beautiful Words" Night from 5:30-6:30pm.

Details to follow!

Staff Highlights: Staff Introductions



Cathy Newton

Cathy Newton joins us with a wealth of educational experience. She has been a classroom teacher, a curriculum coach, and an elementary school principal. Cathy has successfully mentored other teachers and participated in the VMI (Vermont Math Institute) Master of Education program. Cathy spent time in the Rivendell District in its infancy and transitioned seamlessly into our school and her new part-time role. Cathy loves teaching math and is a deeply skilled educator who connects effortlessly with our students. Cathy will teach second and fourth-grade math for the remainder of the year.



Rick Newton

Rick Newton also joins us as a devoted educator in the Upper Valley. Rick has been a PE teacher in the Upper Valley for over 30 years, including service to the Rivendell District while in its infancy. Rick brings to his role a desire to support students through building relationships. Rick holds students to a high standard of performance with a smile on his and care for each student he teaches. Rick will support the fourth and fifth-grade students during academic blocks in the morning, Monday through Thursday.



Ellen Thompson

Ellen Thompson is a multiage consultant who we have hired to support our multiage teachers in the district this year. She is a retired educator of many years who was once crowned Teacher of the Year in Vermont. Ellen spent much of her time teaching in a multiage class of first, second, and third graders. Ellen is the president of the Vermont Council on Literacy and someone our schools have worked with intentionally over the last three years as we developed our literacy curriculum through Partner's for Literacy Learning. Ellen comes to our schools with a background rich in fostering student agency, independence, and a love of learning.



WESTSHIRE CHARACTER TRAITS

512 votes were cast and the results were pretty clear, our community finds value in focussing on fostering the following 5 character traits throughout the year:

Respect
Creativity
Kindness
Responsibility
Perseverance

Stay tuned for more exciting news around these 5 character traits and how we are leaning into making these traits our Westshire Code!





PHYS ED with Mrs. Claffin

Grades 4 and 5 have been participating in an extensive team building unit in PE. Students have been tasked with various challenges to encourage teamwork and problem solving skills. Pictures below are from an activity called "Mission Impossible"



VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS with Mrs. Libby

Students have been learning about lines in art with a "guest teacher", Luna! Check out their beautiful pumpkins the next time you're walking the halls. Students are also preparing songs for a winter exhibition.



LIBRARY with Mrs. Wise

A love of books and reading was brought to our community Halloween celebration as we "Soared to New Heights with Reading"! Students chose 2 books to add to their Halloween stash!



STEAM with Mrs. De Simone

K-1 are learning to code with BeeBots! Kindergarten students worked to code to a chosen image, while first graders used their bots to draw!
2-5 are designing a Fall Food Truck Festival! Developing a theme, a menu, and designing/building a 3D truck prototype.



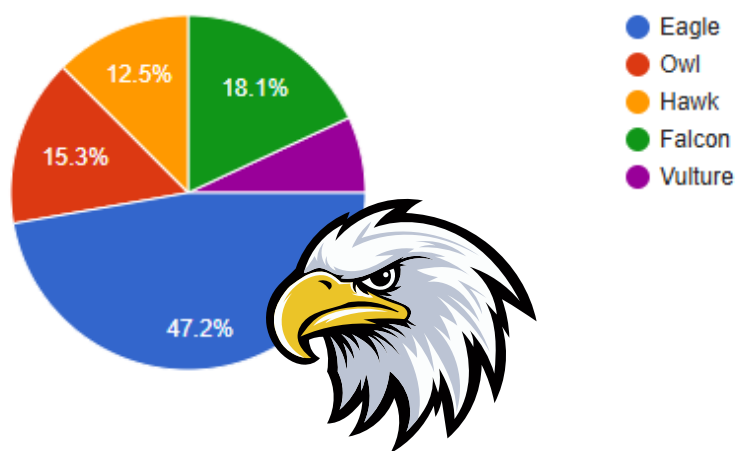
Westshire Votes

Our goal is always to elevate student voice and choice whenever we can. In honor of election day and a couple projects we have going on, Westshire students and staff cast their votes this week.

We will begin focussing on our character traits as a whole school soon and we needed a “mascot”. Check out the voting below...

When you think of Westshire, which Raptor do you feel best represents our community? Choose 1:

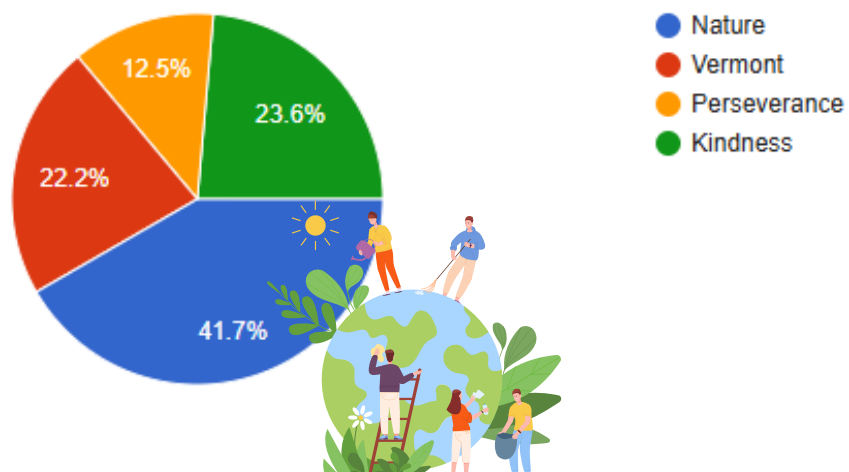
72 responses



As you read earlier in this newsletter, we will be writing a whole school book this year as part of our CLiF Grant. So, we asked everyone at school...

Which theme should we use when writing our whole-school book?

72 responses



October Activities



Local Buzz: What's happening in the Upper Valley?



Imagination Research: Help the Dartmouth Child Development Lab understand how kids think about possibilities. We're looking for kids ages 4-12 to help us explore how we learn to generate good options when faced with open-ended problems. Adults easily come up with ideas for questions like, "What should we have for dinner?" — even though there are endless possibilities, we tend to think of just a few. Our lab seeks to understand how this ability to automatically generate good ideas develops as kids grow. What influences the options they come up with? And how do those options shape the decisions they make? To participate, your child will play a variety of thinking games for 20-25 minutes (options on zoom and in-person at Dartmouth's campus!) It's a great opportunity for your child to exercise their creativity and contribute to the science of education. If you're interested in participating please sign up at https://dartmouth.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cS_A9X9XI5eLgLb0 or email cogscidevlab@gmail.com. More information can be found on our website: <https://phillab.host.dartmouth.edu/childdevlab.htm>!

Rivendell Rec News:

Basketball Sign-ups are live. The registration deadline is 11/8.

[Register at this link](#)

There is a mandatory meeting for all players in grades 1-6 at SME on 11/13 at 6pm.

rivendellrec@gmail.com



Thank you for your continued support!

Food Access:

Follow the links below for more information



<p>WESTSHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</p>	<p>802-333-4668</p>
<p>https://vtwestshirees.schoolinsites.com/</p>	<p>744 VT. Route 113 West Fairlee, VT 05043</p>