



# WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

## JUNIOR BLUES NEWSLETTER



### FEATURED STORY

#### ENROLLMENT

WRHS pre-enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is currently taking place. Students should utilize the information sent via email and introduced during advisory including the Pre-enrollment Screencast. This includes information on graduation requirements, post-secondary planning, and pre-enrollment information. All presentations and course guides can be found on the counseling website under ACADEMIC PLANNING.

Counselors will meet with students in the auditorium to help with pre-enrollment on the following dates: February 12 (juniors), February 13 (sophomores), February 16 (freshmen). Pre-enrollment requests must be submitted to Naviance by February 26.

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# From the Desk of Our Principal



Welcome back! I do hope that you had a memorable winter break. As you know, another semester is underway at WRHS and it is shaping up to be as eventful as the last! Winter sports and activities are in full swing and classes are going well!

A very important upcoming event that I would like to direct your attention to is Student-Led Conferences. They will occur on Wednesday and Thursday, February 18 and 19 respectively. Conference times are:

Wednesday, February 18, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Thursday, February 19, 7:30 - 11:00 a.m.  
Thursday, February 19, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
Thursday, February 19, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

One of the most important things that you can do as a parent to help your child achieve is to not only establish regular and open communication with their teachers, but also become informed about what courses and programs your student most enjoys and the ways in which high school experiences and opportunities can and will relate to post-secondary success. Our Student-Led Conferences afford students and parents the opportunity for this very thing, alongside their Advisory Teacher. The primary focus for spring conferences will consist of students' reflections of the courses they've taken and the courses in which they are planning to take next school year. Students will talk to parents about their individualized 4-year Plan of Study, share their academic and personal goals, and reflect upon how these things connect to careers of interest. I would also encourage you to share any other information about your child that would assist us in better understanding their needs.

We plan to offer the same scheduling opportunities as we did in October through our scheduling platform, [myconferencetime.com](http://myconferencetime.com). Students will sign up during their advisory class for their Student-Led Conference between February 2nd and February 13th. Beginning February 16th, you will have the opportunity to schedule with as many of your student's other teachers as you need to. 15-minute appointments will be available and you'll have the opportunity to choose virtual or in-person meetings. Our Counseling and Administrative Staffs will also be listed on our scheduling platform and available during conferences. Please do not hesitate to schedule with one of us.

As we move closer to the end of the third 9-weeks, we are aware that some students may be struggling. Tuesday/Thursday Interventions continue and are a great opportunity for students who need more time on campus to work. If your child is referred by our staff, we certainly hope you will support our efforts to ensure their success by encouraging attendance. It is our mission to ensure that every student learns to the best of their ability.

Please let us know how your student is doing. We hope to see you during conferences!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Raines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Ed" on the top line and "Raines" on the bottom line.

Ed Raines, Principal  
[raineedw@usd437.net](mailto:raineedw@usd437.net)

# WRHS Counseling Office

Counseling Website: [bit.ly/wrhs counselors](http://bit.ly/wrhs counselors)

Crisis Hotline: 785-232-5005 or 988

[Counseling Staff](#)

## Pre-enrollment

WRHS pre-enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is currently taking place. Students should utilize the information sent via email and introduced during advisory including the Pre-enrollment Screencast. This includes information on graduation requirements, post-secondary planning, and [pre-enrollment information](#). All presentations and course guides can be found on the counseling website under [ACADEMIC PLANNING](#).

Counselors will meet with students in the auditorium to help with pre-enrollment on the following dates: February 12 (juniors), February 13 (sophomores), February 16 (freshmen). Pre-enrollment requests must be submitted to Naviance by February 26. When students have questions, they should email or see their [school counselor](#).

## Program Highlights

We have highlighted several WRHS programs in this newsletter including Washburn Institute of Technology, Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate. Those highlights can be found [HERE](#). If you or your children have questions, please contact your school counselor.

## KBOR 7 Bucket Framework

Juniors and seniors were shown the following [screencast](#) regarding the KBOR 7 Bucket Framework. Students attending Kansas Board of Regents colleges or Washburn should be familiar with the general education requirements.

## ACT on March 3

310 juniors are registered for the State ACT on March 3 and will take the test online. Juniors should check their email regularly for updates on testing details. Juniors were sent [ACT preparation](#) resources by email. The counseling website also has [preparation resources](#). We encourage students to prepare for the test.

## Scholarships

Many new scholarships have been added to the [Counseling Website](#). The list provides access to applications as well as information on eligibility requirements and deadlines. We encourage students to take advantage of these opportunities and apply!

## College Visits

As you start to make summer plans, we encourage families to visit college campuses. This experience can help students set goals, make decisions, and understand the application process. Advice on planning a college visit can be found at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide>.

## Stress Management and Teens

This article provides information on ways parents can help teens learn to manage their stress. A few tips are included below. We hope families find this information helpful. Click [HERE](#).

Monitor if stress is affecting their teen's health, behavior, thoughts, or feelings

Listen carefully to teens and watch for overloading

Learn and model stress management skills

Support involvement in sports and other pro-social activities

# 💕 February Advisory Activities 💕

## Freshmen

- February 3** – Student Led Conference Prep
- February 10** – Winter Royalty Candidate Videos (Classroom)
- February 17** – Student Led Conference Prep & Academic Check-In
- February 24** – Google Drive & Email, Pre-Enrollment Part III

## Sophomores

- February 3** – Grade & Attendance Check + Student Led Conference Prep
- February 10** – Winter Royalty Candidate Videos (Classroom)
- February 17** – Student Led Conference Prep
- February 24** – Pre-Enrollment Part III

## Juniors

- February 3** – Student Led Conference Prep
- February 10** – Winter Royalty Candidate Videos (Classroom)
- February 17** – Academic Check-In for Conferences (Update Grades on Presentation)
- February 24** – Pre-Enrollment Part III

## Seniors

- February 3** – Student Led Conference Prep
- February 10** – Winter Royalty Assembly (Auditorium)
- February 17** – Student Led Conference Prep
- February 24** – Counselor-Led Activity

*Happy February & Valentine's Season!*

Tues. & Thurs. 3:05-4:15pm

# AFTER SCHOOL LABS

Library

English

Math

Science

Social Studies

**Room G2342**

AF-JROTC

**Room F656**

Student Services Resource

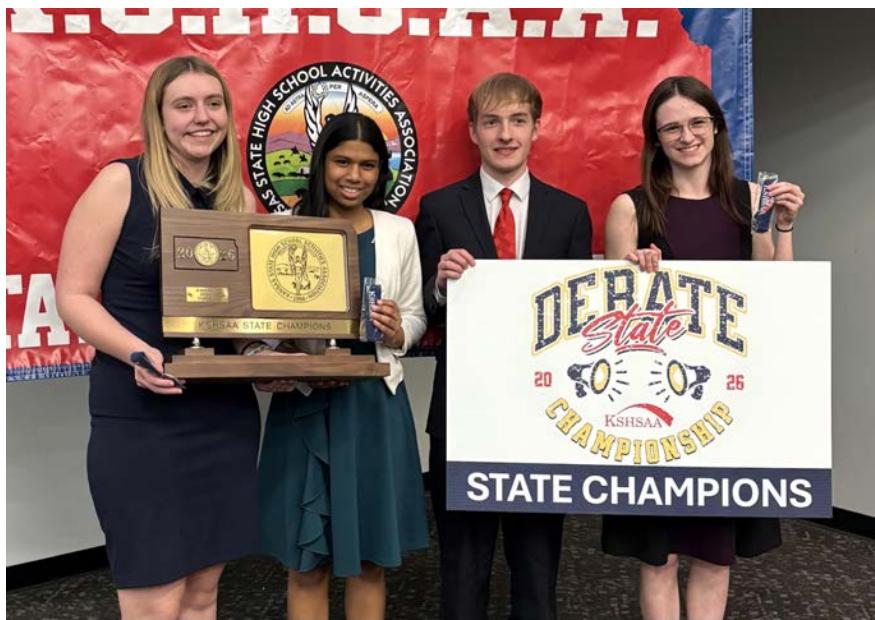


**Need a ride  
home?**

Sign up in the Main Office  
before 6<sup>th</sup> Period!

# ◆ Debate

## DEBATE TEAM BRINGS HOME ANOTHER STATE TITLE



Jijo and Garv Khurana, who earned recognition as double finalists.

Congratulations to all of our debaters and coaches on their hard work, dedication, and continued excellence representing Washburn Rural at the highest level!

Congratulations to Tim Ellis and the outstanding 4-speaker debate team: Campbell Hight, Shri Chidambaranathan, Tarrence Byrd, and Sophie Heinen for an incredible performance at the recent KSHSAA State Debate Tournament. The team dominated the competition and captured yet another State Championship, finishing with a remarkable 14–0 record at State. What an achievement!

The success didn't stop there. Washburn Rural also had strong showings in the 2-speaker debate. A big shout-out to Zain Chaudhry and Rebecca Reed, who advanced to the quarterfinals, and to Joel

# ◆ AFJROTC



AFJROTC had a solid first semester with their marksmanship team finishing their regular season with a five game winning streak and raised their position to 5th place in the Air Force division of the Orion League. The drill team finished 3rd in the 14 team, Topeka West color guard and drill competition. The Academic Bowl team advanced to the second round of the College Options Foundation Academic Bowl Championships for the 13th consecutive year. And our cadets completed nearly 1,000 community service hours while excelling in competition.

This semester they look forward to competing in the second round of the Armed Forces Academic Bowl. The new shooters begin competition January 26th. The drill team will be back in action at the Lee's Summit Invitational on February 7th. Finally, they will visit Joint Base San Antonio, TX for our curriculum in action trip at the end of March.

# ◆ Thespians

The Washburn Rural High School Thespians have been busy, and highly successful, this season! On January 8-10, members of Thespian Troupe #6193 attended the Kansas Thespian Festival and returned home with impressive honors that highlight their dedication and talent both on and off the stage.



Washburn Rural was recognized as a Kansas Gold Honor Troupe, an award celebrating the troupe's outstanding accomplishments throughout the 2025 calendar year. This distinction reflects the students' commitment to excellence in performance, leadership, and service.

In addition, 20 WRHS students competed in Thespy events, with 11 students earning Superior ratings. These top ratings qualify the students to advance to the International Thespian Festival, showcasing their skills on a national stage. However, they will not be going this year, but it is still a great honor!

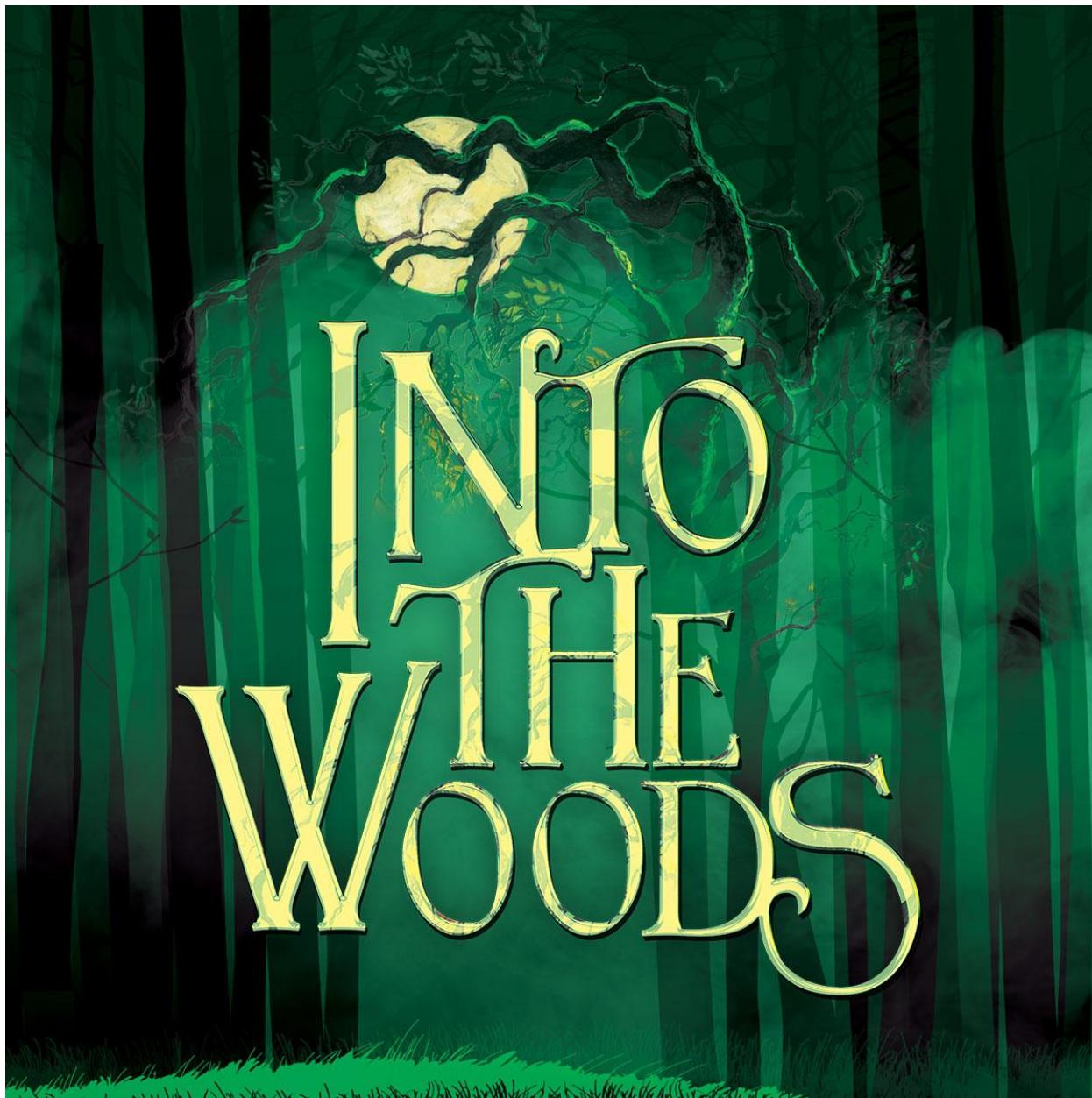
## 2025-26 THESPY RESULTS

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT
GROUP ACTING	COSTUME DESIGN
CHASE/ELI/BECK - SHOWCASE	JESS
SOLO MUSICAL	MUSICAL DANCE
AUDREY A.	HALEY
RAIN	CAMBRIA
WESTON	SOLO MUSICAL
CAMBRIA	BAILEY
KACI	ANNA J.
ELI	SOLO ACTING
TILLIE	AUDREY C.
MAX	DUET MUSICAL
ELERY	MILO/ANNA J.
DUET MUSICAL	PLAYWRITING
AUDREY A./BECK	RAIN

The success continued in the One Act competition, where 17 students performed *Booby Trap*. Their hard work paid off as the troupe earned 1st place, qualifying Washburn Rural to represent Kansas at the International Thespian Festival this summer, however the troupe will not be attending.

Congratulations to all of our talented students and to directors Mr. McCoy, Mr. Lucchesi, and Mrs. Bernick for their leadership and dedication. The WRHS Thespians continue to make our school proud!

# Theatre - Musical



Washburn Rural Theatre is proud to present Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's Into the Woods.

**February 5, 6, 7 at 7:00 p.m. and February 8 at 1:00 p.m.**

James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim take everyone's favorite storybook characters and bring them together for a timeless, yet relevant, piece... and a rare modern classic. The Tony Award-winning book and score are both enchanting and touching.

The story follows a baker and his wife, who wish to have a child; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King's Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the Baker and his wife learn that they cannot have a child because of a Witch's curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone's wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results.

One of Sondheim's most popular works, Into the Woods is a musically sophisticated show with the opportunity to feature actors adept at dark comedy. Designers will especially enjoy highlighting the fantastical elements of this magical world.

You can purchase a general admission ticket at the door or on the [WRHS GoFan Website](#).

# ◆ Art Department

## Scholastic Art Competition

Fifteen talented artists from Washburn Rural High School received recognition for their work at the 2026 Regional Scholastic Art Competition in Wichita.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The Scholastic Awards look for work that demonstrates originality, technical skills, and the emergence of personal voice or vision.

This year, more than 1,600 artworks were submitted by students across Eastern Kansas, with 509 pieces earning regional honors from local Scholastic Awards affiliate Mark Arts. Award recipients' work was recognized by a panel of creative professionals as the most outstanding work submitted. Washburn Rural High School had 29 works selected this year. Silver and Gold Key works will be on display at Mark Arts from Friday, February 6, through Saturday, March 28. The Open House and Awards Ceremony will take place on Saturday, March 28 from 10 am - 12 pm.

This gallery contains the works of our Gold Key and Silver Key winners. To view all 15 award-winning pieces, visit: <https://usd437.net/news/2026-01-2026-scholastic-art-competition/public-wrhs-home>.

## Kansas Art Education



Washburn Rural High School students are being recognized for their outstanding artistic talent through the Kansas Art Education Association's Youth Art Month Flag Design Competition.

In the high school division, Alicja Tekieli earned an Honorable Mention, showcasing her creativity and strong design skills among competitors from across Kansas. In addition, Jonathan Fernkopf achieved an exceptional honor by winning First Place and being named the Overall State Winner.

As a result of his top award, Jonathan's winning design will be transformed into an official flag and displayed at the National Art Education Conference in Chicago this March. This prestigious opportunity highlights both Jonathan's talent and the strength of Washburn Rural High School's art program.

Congratulations to Alicja and Jonathan for representing Washburn Rural High School and Kansas art education with excellence and creativity!

# Hall of Fame

On January 9th, the 2026 Washburn Rural High School Hall of Fame inductees were honored during an induction ceremony.

Christopher Currie (Class of 1983) – Currie built an extraordinary 21-year career in the United States Marine Corps, retiring as a Gunnery Sergeant. He spent 17 years in the elite Marine Corps Reconnaissance community and deployed in multiple major operations, including Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. His courage and leadership under fire earned him the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, among other honors. Currie's lifelong commitment to service exemplifies the highest ideals of leadership, integrity, and dedication.

1989 WRHS Football Team – The 1989 Junior Blues completed a perfect 12–0 season and captured the Class 5A state championship in a thrilling 10–8 victory over Salina Central. Led by head coach Ron Bowen, the team's dominant defense, resilience in close games, and unmatched toughness defined one of the greatest seasons in WRHS football history.

Established in 2003, the WRHS Hall of Fame recognizes graduates and staff who have achieved remarkable accomplishments at the local, state, or national levels. For more information, please visit <https://usd437.net/wrhs/hall-of-fame>.

The poster is a blue-themed graphic with gold confetti. At the top, it says "2026 Hall of Fame" in a large, gold, cursive font, with "INDUCTEES" in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font below it. On the left, there's a photo of Christopher Currie in military gear, kneeling and holding a rifle. On the right, there's a photo of the 1989 WRHS Football Team, a group of about 30 people in blue jerseys, sitting in two rows on a wooden floor. Below the team photo, text reads "WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL KANSAS 5A STATE CHAMPIONS 1989 RECORD: 12-0". At the bottom, there are two captions: "Christopher Currie Class of 1983" and "WRHS Football Team 1989 Class 5A State Champions". The Washburn Rural High School logo, a stylized "WR", is in the bottom right corner.

Christopher Currie  
Class of 1983

WRHS Football Team  
1989 Class 5A State Champions

WASHBURN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL  
KANSAS 5A STATE CHAMPIONS 1989  
RECORD: 12-0

# National Honor Society

## Washburn Rural NHS Welcomes 68 New Inductees

On December 3rd, the Washburn Rural Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) proudly welcomed 68 new members during its annual induction ceremony.



NHS, the nation's oldest and most respected honor organization, recognizes students who not only excel academically but also demonstrate a strong commitment to leadership, service, and character. This year's inductees, composed of outstanding juniors and seniors, have shown dedication to their studies and a willingness to contribute meaningfully to both the school and the wider community.

As new members, they will continue to grow through opportunities to uphold academic excellence, serve others, take on leadership roles, and strengthen the core values of character that the NHS represents. Washburn Rural looks forward to the positive impact these students will make throughout the year.

Please join us in congratulating the 2025–2026 NHS inductees:

Maddison Bahr	Emery Hall	Kailyn Petersen
Jadyn Barnett	Aiden Harper	Vivian Pham
Stella Berry	Amara Hibbert	Davin Potts
Elizabeth Birch	Khloe Hillmer	Chevas Ray
Morgan Boose	Kaci Hodgson	Alex Recinos
Brooklyn Bowling	Levi Hoskinson	Brooklyn Rutherford
Will Boyd	Serenity Hulse	Cooper Schmidt
Enzo Cabriolo	Lucy Hundley	Avery Schulmeister
Josie Carlgren	Jenna Jensen	Emily Sharp
Russell (Parker) Chapman	Greer Jepson	Elia Smith
Gopikaashri (Shri)	Julia Katzer	Elizabeth Sturgeon
Chidambaranathan	Keegan Knudtson	Jackson Svaty
Saylor Classi	Lauren Lebruska	Tyler Tangye
Julia Deister	Kelsey Louderback	Jacob Tanner
Wes Deister	Lucy May	Cohen Thiessen
Eva Ericson	Luke Miller	Langley Tiller
Valentina Garcia Munoz	Sophia Miller	Maelie (Miles) Timberlake
Kennedy Gish	Andres Morao-Jaspe	Jackson Tuckwin
Megan Glinka	Kate Muir	Abigail Wanamaker
Brody Grogan	MyLee Mullins	Bennett Wells
Brady Haag	Lee Napier	Diana Wolgast
Genevieve Haas	Dominic Nimz	Katherine Wolgast
Cambria Hall	Halle Owen	Kennedy Wright

# Tangled: A Night Under Lanterns

Winter Formal Spirit Week

February 9th-13th



## Monday, February 9th

**“Mother Knows Best:”**

**Soccer Mom Vs. BBQ Dad**



## Tuesday, February 10th

**“Tangled Tuesday:”**

**PJs and Crazy Hair Day**



## Wednesday, February 11th

**“Reverse the Clock Wednesday:”**

**Dress like elementary kid you**



## Thursday, February 12th

**“Pascal Day Thursday:”**

**Wear Camo or Green**

## Friday, February 13th

**“Lantern Festival Friday:”**

**Freshman: Blue    Junior: Yellow**

**Sophomore: Pink    Seniors: Purple**

**Staff: Black**

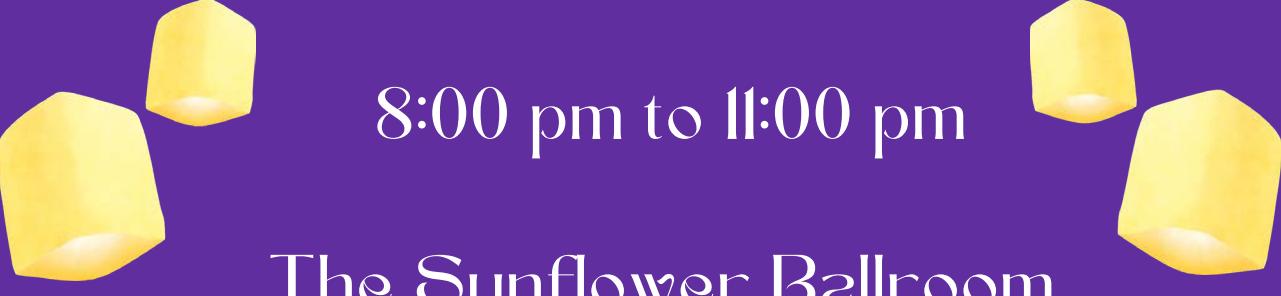




WRHS Presents

# Tangled: A Night Under Lanterns

Saturday February 14th, 2026



8:00 pm to 11:00 pm

The Sunflower Ballroom  
1717 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66612

Follow us on Instagram for parking details  
and important dance information  
**@waru\_stuco**

## STAR TICKET INFORMATION STAR

ALL students wanting to purchase tickets for the dance must fill out this google form before paying for tickets through the bank.

Tickets are \$10 each and can be paid for and picked up from the Bank during lunch from February 3rd - February 13th (you must show the bank the Google Form Confirmation Email).

Outside dates must be signed up via Google Form by February 10th at 3:30pm!

Tickets will only be sold at the door for Washburn Rural students the evening of the dance.



• • • • • READ WITH FINNEY • • • • •

Open to  
all  
students  
& staff!

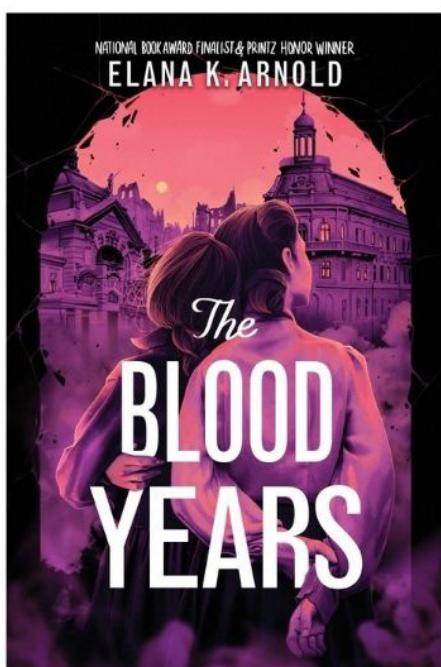
# BOOK CLUB



3rd Meeting Title:

*The Blood Years* (2025) by: Elana K. Arnold  
2025 ProjectLit Selection & Printz Honoree

Historical Fiction



**Where?** WRHS Library

**When?** Monday, March 30th

**Who?** ALL WRHS Students & Staff - 1st 10 Students to sign up will get a FREE copy of the book to keep!

<https://bit.ly/readwithfinney2526>

Sign up: Feb 9<sup>th</sup> - Feb 27<sup>th</sup>

Books Delivered: Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>

Read Along: Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> - Mar 27<sup>th</sup>

Then, visit the Library on Mar 30<sup>th</sup> to talk books with Finney!



Connect with us @wrhslib for:

- technology support
- homework help
- reading recommendations
- area job openings
- school activities and more



g

# Mrs. Finney's Monthly YA Book Recommendation

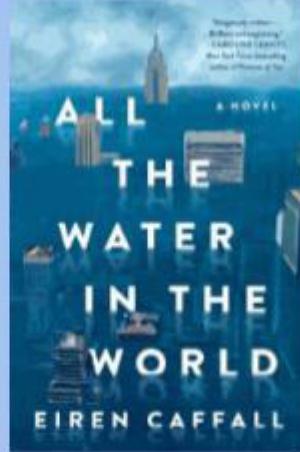
February 2026



*The Last Bookstore on Earth*  
By Lily Braun-Arnold  
F BRA

Almost one year after acid rain fell from the sky and almost ended the world, Liz has been trying to survive in a bookshop turned trading post. But there are rumors that the rain is going to come again, and her bookshop might not stand up to a second storm. Mix in a mystery guest who promises to help repair the place in exchange for a place to stay, and nothing could go wrong, right?

*Similar Titles Include:*



Connect with us @wrhslib for:

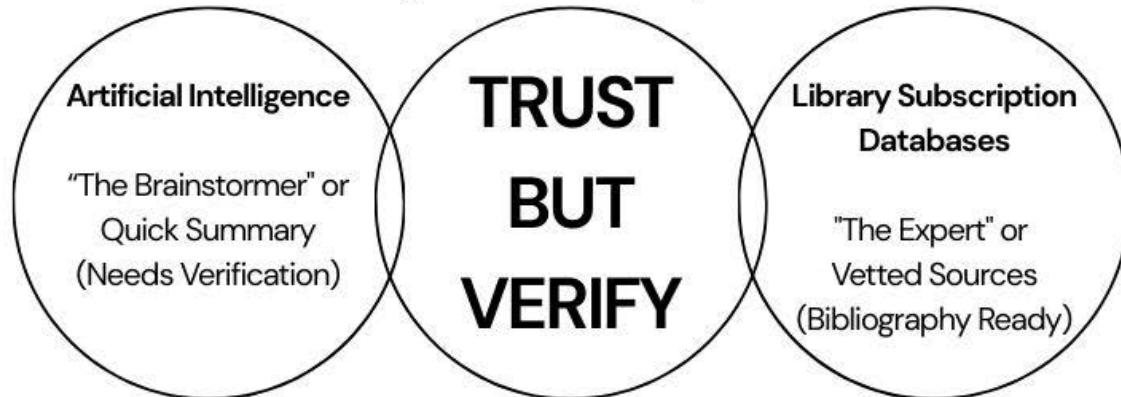
- technology support
- homework help
- reading recommendations
- area job openings
- school activities and more



Text 4 Help: 785-260-0015  
Marcy Sandberg sandbmor@usd437.net  
Victoria Finney finnevict@usd437.net

Visit the WRHS Library to place a hold on or check out one of these amazing books today!

# AI vs. Library Subscription Databases



Feature	AI Tools	Library Subscription Databases
Speed	Instant responses and summaries	Requires searching and filtering
Credibility	Information varies in accuracy	Verified, peer-reviewed sources
Citations	Often lacks proper references	Provides full citation details
Depth	Broad overviews and explanations	In-depth, specialized research
Best Use	Brainstorming and drafting	Evidence-based assignments



# THINK OUTSIDE THE LINES

Learn all sides of today's social issues and develop your own views with *Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints*.

**ACCESS NOW**

Find credible sources for both sides of social and political issues: global warming, the minimum wage, the effects of junk food—there's no shortage of debatable topics in the national conversation. Finding the most trustworthy information and insights can bolster any side of an issue, but it can also be time consuming. Fortunately, our library subscribes to Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints to help you go into serious search mode.

**Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints** is a multi-media, mobile-friendly database that brings together authoritative content on over 300 political and social issues, including: major coverage in the New York Times, Newsweek, and more; topic overviews and expert analyses; video and audio clips; interactive maps focusing on trends; and charts and graphs.

Visit <https://wrhsresearch.weebly.com/subscription-databases.html> for access to library subscription databases from WRHS, TSCPL and the State Library of Kansas. Reach out to Mrs. Sandberg [[sandbmar@usd437.net](mailto:sandbmar@usd437.net)] or Mrs. Finney [[finnevic@usd437.net](mailto:finnevic@usd437.net)] if you need help getting started.



# STUDENT SERVICES

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AND UNIFIED SPORTS

## KING AND QUEEN OF COURTS NOMINEES

This year we have three incredible students who have been nominated for King and Queen of Courts. Congratulations to Addison Maxwell and Maxwell Guth, nominated by Circle of Friends and Conner Schonlaw, nominated by the boys basketball team.

## UNIFIED SPORTS

With winter, comes our next Unified Sport: Bocce Ball! We are excited for our partners and athletes to compete on February 28<sup>th</sup> at Topeka West High School. Looking ahead, our spring sports will consist of Unified Track and Field and Unified Soccer.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- February 17<sup>th</sup> - Everyone's a Junior Blue Night
- February 28<sup>th</sup> - Unified Bocce Ball tournament at Topeka West
- March 4<sup>th</sup> - Spread the Word Day



SIGN UP TO JOIN US!



# Career and Technical Education



Every February, schools across the nation celebrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month®, a time dedicated to raising awareness of the vital role CTE plays in preparing students for success in both college and careers. CTE programs give students hands-on, real-world learning experiences that connect classroom instruction with high-demand, high-skill career pathways.

Through CTE courses, students can explore careers, earn industry-recognized credentials, develop employability skills, and gain a clearer vision of their future, whether that includes college, technical training, the military, or entering the workforce. CTE also partners closely with local businesses and industries to ensure learning stays relevant and aligned with workforce needs.

We encourage families to learn more about the many CTE career pathways available to students and how these programs help learners graduate ready for what comes next. CTE Month is a great opportunity to celebrate student achievement, innovative instruction, and the pathways that lead to lifelong success.

For more information on Career and Technical Month [click here](#).

## WRHS Enrollment for 2026-27 School Year

As your student is working with their Individual Plan of Study and is thinking about the enrollment process they might consider Career & Technical Education classes. CTE provides students with not only career and academic skills but soft skills that are needed for the modern workplace, such as: critical thinking, communication, team work, citizenship, integrity and ethical leadership, research tools, creativity, and innovation. Explore current offerings in the [course planning guide](#).

## All Parents Invitation - TopCity FAME Launch event - February 3rd

On February 3, GO Topeka will be hosting the launch of TopCity FAME (Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education), a new employer-led workforce program that provides a paid, earn-while-you-learn pathway into careers in advanced manufacturing. Event details are included in the attached flyers, which includes a QR code for registration. Registration is requested but not required, and walk-ins are welcome.

### About TopCity FAME:

TopCity FAME connects high school graduates and adults directly with local manufacturing employers. Participants are hired by employers, earn a paycheck while completing technical training, and gain the skills needed for long-term, in-demand careers. The program is part of the national FAME USA network and represents only the second FAME chapter established in the state of Kansas.

We would greatly appreciate your help in:

- Sharing the attached flyer with students and parents, particularly juniors and seniors
- Encouraging attendance by students interested in hands-on, career-focused pathways
- Sharing with families who may be exploring post-graduation options beyond a traditional four-year college route

[Click here for the event flyer](#)

# Career and Technical Education

## Stormont Vail Apprenticeship

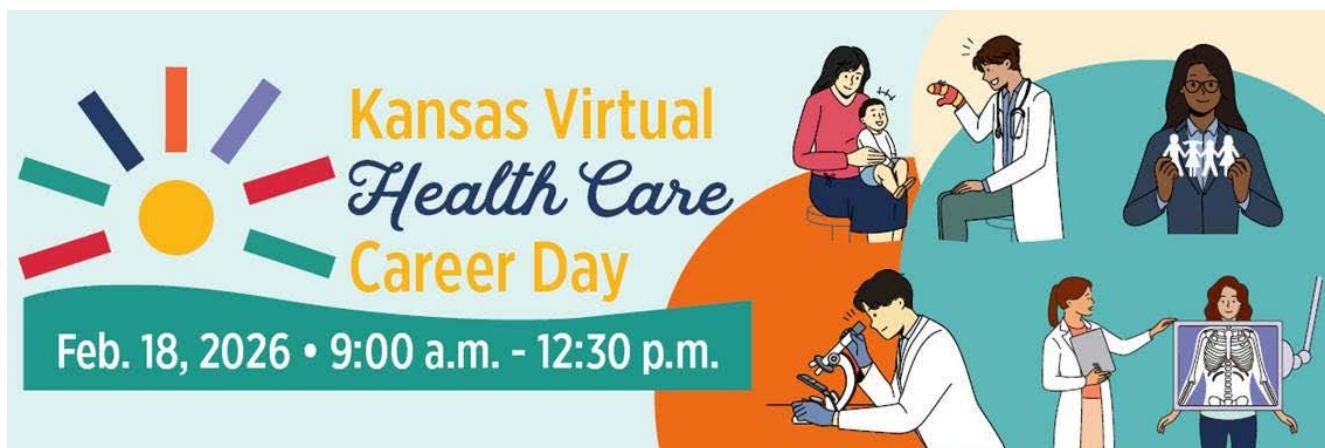
Stormont Vail Health is launching a Facilities Apprenticeship Program designed to prepare the next generation of skilled facilities professionals while supporting the critical environments where patient care happens every day.

### What Is the Facilities Apprenticeship Program?

- A paid, hands-on apprenticeship that combines:
  - Classroom education through Washburn Tech
  - On-the-job training with our experienced Facilities team
  - Real-world experience in a healthcare environment
- Apprentices gain the skills, knowledge, and experience needed for a long-term career in facilities and building maintenance.

[Click here for the event flyer](#)

## 2026 Virtual Health Care Career Day



The Virtual Health Care Career Day is an opportunity for students of all ages to learn about eight different roles in health care and engage in a live Q&A with the professionals serving in those occupations on February 18, 2026, from 9:00 am-12:30 pm.

This event is entirely virtual and will be hosted on Zoom. You will be automatically provided with the Zoom link and a calendar invite upon registration. Some schools choose to participate through health science classes; others broadcast the event to an open cafeteria/auditorium/resource room for all students to watch or some schools encourage students to register so they watch from their individual devices. Join specific segments or watch all; the event can be tailored to what works best for your school. All are welcome to participate, so please feel free to share the event with parents, students, school partnerships and your community.

You may register for free [here](#). The hosts from the Kansas Hospital Association, the Kansas Board of Regents, and the Kansas State Department of Education look forward to your participation.

## Stormont Vail Health

Stormont Vail Health's Talent Acquisition Team is excited to invite your school to participate in our 2026 *Choose Your Path* Career Exploration Event, created for high-potential students who are interested in pursuing careers in healthcare.

### Event Details

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Pozez Education Center, Stormont Vail Health

This experience allows students to:

- Attend brief departmental presentations from a variety of healthcare disciplines
- Connect one-on-one with healthcare professionals across clinical and non-clinical roles
- Explore real-world career pathways in a hospital setting
- Participate in optional mini department tours based on interest and engagement

### Manufacturing Program

The welding 3 students in Mr. Harvey's class will soon be accepting applications to make welding repairs in the community. The students/program is equipped to complete several aspects of the repairs. If you are interested, please contact Teresa Golden [goldeter@usd437.net](mailto:goldeter@usd437.net) to inquire.

### Students Gain Insight Into Construction Careers Through Torgeson Electric Visit & Tour



Students recently had the opportunity to engage with representatives from Torgeson Electric, gaining a firsthand look at the company, its work in the construction industry, and the many career pathways available within the skilled trades.

During the session, students asked questions about day-to-day responsibilities, long-term career growth, and the wide variety of roles that exist in the electrical and construction fields. Company representatives emphasized the increasing demand for skilled electricians and highlighted how the industry offers stability, advancement, and meaningful hands-on work.

A key focus of the visit was Torgeson Electric's four-year apprenticeship program, which gives participants the chance to earn while they learn. The program provides paid, on-the-job training supported by full employee benefits, helping apprentices gain both technical knowledge and real-world experience without the burden of student debt.

The event offered students valuable insight into an essential and growing industry, while showcasing Torgeson Electric's commitment to developing the next generation of electrical professionals.

# Career and Technical Education

## Women in Business Career Summit Inspires the Next Generation of Leaders

On Monday, November 10, 2025, students from across the region gathered at Kansas State University for the annual Women in Business Career Summit, a day designed to empower future leaders through hands-on learning, real-world stories, and direct connections with industry professionals. From the first morning welcome, to the afternoon scholarship awards, the event offered students a powerful look at the diverse paths women are taking to shape the future of business, technology, design, and leadership.

The day opened in the K-State Student Union with a warm welcome and overview before students moved into the first round of breakout sessions. Presenters shared their expertise on careers in social media, corporate leadership, architecture, actuarial science, and the built environment. Each session encouraged students to explore new possibilities, whether learning how brands grow online, understanding pathways to corporate boardrooms, or discovering how math and risk analysis drive actuarial careers.

During the second breakout block, students explored topics such as personal branding, women's journeys into information technology, leadership and curiosity in college, therapeutic horticulture, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in the workplace. These sessions blended creativity, career planning, and self-discovery, helping students better understand how their strengths can shape their futures.

At lunch, attendees gathered in the Grand Ballroom for a keynote address by Andrea Albright, Executive Vice President and Chief Growth Officer at Walmart International. Albright shared insights from her global leadership experience and offered encouragement to students preparing to enter an evolving workforce.

The afternoon concluded at the K-State College of Business, where faculty, staff, and current students welcomed attendees for a networking session, panel discussion, and scholarship celebration. Five K-State business students shared candid stories about navigating college, exploring majors, and developing confidence as young professionals. More than \$15,000 in scholarships were awarded, including Washburn Rural's own Giselle Foster, who earned a \$1,000 scholarship to Kansas State University for her leadership, ambition, and commitment to excellence.



# Career and Technical Education

## FFA Students and Mr. Harvey's welding III students compete at Paola



On December 3rd, 11 welding students represented WRHS by competing against nearly 160 welders from 20 schools at the Paola Welding Invitational. Welders were given varying metal fabrication tasks that tested their abilities to cut and weld using multiple processes. Students were scored by Certified Welding Inspectors from The Missouri Welding Institute.

The novice team consisting of Michelle Anderson, Sam Schwartz, Jackson Golden, Phoenix Benaka, and Caleb Pearce, earned 3rd place, only 9 points behind 1st. Impressive individual awards went to Michelle Anderson earning 5th place as overall novice welder (the only female to make the podium in either division), and Sam Schwartz with an amazing 2nd.

In the advanced division, Emma Ogleby, Kaeden Griffith, Desmond Grindal, Quintin Alvarez, and Stryker Grosfield completed incredibly challenging tasks from 5G pipe welds to TIG groove welds, earning 5th place overall as a team. Desmond Grindal earned a 9th place finish as an individual. Cypris Fields attended as our alternate welder and proudly served as our photojournalist. --Story and photos by Cypris Fields

## STEM Carnival



The annual STEAM Carnival, hosted by the [Washburn Rural High School](#) Computer Science Honor Society, was a tremendous success! Students in grades K-8 rotated through several interactive stations, exploring hands-on activities in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. They dug into topics like volume, wind energy, physics, biology, coding, robotics, animation, and more!

Held each year in honor of Computer Science Education Week, the event continues to inspire young learners across our district. A big thank you to our CSHS leaders and their sponsor, Haley Schmitz, for hosting such a fun and educational evening!

## HOSA

The Washburn Rural High School HOSA Club (Health Occupations Students of America) made a meaningful impact in the community this holiday season through a successful toy drive benefiting the pediatric unit at Stormont Vail Hospital.

From early November through December 2, HOSA organized a school-wide collection that resulted in more than 60 donated items. Donations included plush stuffed animals, coloring books and crayons, fuzzy socks, board games, card games, and other child-friendly gifts. Following the drive, HOSA members volunteered their time during multiple wrapping days to prepare the items for delivery.

Adding a personal touch, the WR Letters of Love Club created handmade holiday cards to accompany each gift, helping bring extra warmth and encouragement to young patients.

# Career and Technical Education



On December 18, Stormont Vail staff welcomed HOSA students for the official toy drive allowing them to see firsthand the positive impact of their service. HOSA officers Justin Jeon and Alizah Alvarez-Chedzoy played key roles in promoting the drive and delivering the donations.

The Washburn Rural HOSA Club extends its sincere gratitude to the student body and community members whose generosity made the drive possible. The experience provided students with a powerful opportunity to practice compassion, give back to others, and serve the community during the holiday season.

## WRHS SkillsUSA Hosts First Fundraiser to Support the Impact Topeka Foundation

Washburn Rural High School's newly formed SkillsUSA chapter launched its very first community service project this semester, hosting a successful fundraiser to support the **Impact Topeka Foundation**, a local organization dedicated to improving the lives of families and youth across the Topeka community.

As a new Career & Technical Student Organization on campus, SkillsUSA has quickly gained momentum, attracting students who are passionate about leadership, service, and hands-on career preparation. The fundraiser marked the chapter's debut public event and students were eager to make a meaningful impact right from the start.

SkillsUSA members planned and executed the entire event, applying skills tied to leadership, teamwork, organization, and professional communication. Students created promotional materials, coordinated donation stations, and collaborated with teachers, staff, and local partners to spread the word about the foundation's mission and needs.

Advisers praised the students for their initiative, creativity, and dedication, noting that this event set the tone for future projects and competitions the chapter will pursue. The fundraiser not only provided meaningful support to a local nonprofit but also gave students firsthand experience in planning, leadership, and public engagement.

As SkillsUSA continues to grow at Washburn Rural High School, the chapter looks forward to hosting more service events, participating in leadership conferences, and competing in career-based contests. Their first fundraiser stands as a proud milestone one that highlighted both their commitment to community and their excitement for what comes next.

## WRHS Students in "The Shack" Host Successful Fundraiser for the WRHS Care Closet

Students enrolled in *The Shack*, Washburn Rural High School's student-run business, demonstrated leadership, creativity, and community spirit as they organized and hosted their schoolwide fundraiser to support the WRHS Care Closet. The WRHS Care Closet, a vital resource for students in need, provides clothing, personal

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hygiene products, snacks, and other essentials to help ensure that all students can thrive academically and personally.

The Shack students took charge of every aspect of the event from planning and budgeting, to marketing, promotion, and day-of operations. The goal was simple: raise donations and awareness for a resource that directly helps their peers.

In the weeks leading up to the fundraiser, students designed posters, managed social media updates, and coordinated with teachers and staff to advertise the event. They also created themed activities and donation incentives to encourage participation across the school community. Their hard work paid off as students, staff, and families joined together to donate items and funds in support of the Care Closet's mission.

By the end of the event, The Shack collected an impressive amount of donations, helping to restock the Care Closet with much-needed supplies. The success of the fundraiser reflects the strong culture of empathy and leadership at Washburn Rural High School. Through The Shack, students continue to learn that business education isn't just about profit, it's about problem-solving, collaboration, and making a positive impact on the community around them.

## Washburn University Dean Shares Career Insights with Students



On December 15, Dr. Dean Sollars, Dean of the School of Business at Washburn University, visited Mr. McFall's Consumer and Personal Finance class to share his career journey and discuss opportunities available through Washburn's business programs.

Dr. Sollars spoke about his path into higher education leadership, explaining how his background in economics, teaching, and administration led him to his current role as dean. He emphasized that careers do not always follow a straight line and that adaptability, education, and a willingness to take on leadership roles are key factors in long-term success.

As dean, Dr. Sollars oversees Washburn University's School of Business, which offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, including accounting, finance, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, data analytics, and international business. He shared how Washburn focuses on preparing students for real-world careers by combining strong academics with hands-on learning, internships, and connections to local and regional businesses.

Dr. Sollars also highlighted the importance of AACSB accreditation, a prestigious recognition earned by only a small percentage of business schools worldwide. This accreditation ensures that Washburn business students

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receive a high-quality education that meets rigorous academic and professional standards, helping graduates stand out to employers and graduate schools.

In addition to discussing academics, Dr. Sollars talked about recent campus improvements, including the remodeling of Henderson Hall into Advisor's Hall. This updated facility is designed to better support students through academic advising, career planning, and student services. Advisor's Hall reflects Washburn's commitment to helping students navigate college choices and career goals with personalized support. Dr. Sollars encouraged students to begin thinking early about their future careers, take advantage of available resources, and remain open to learning opportunities. His visit gave students valuable insight into higher education, leadership, and how Washburn University supports student success from enrollment through graduation and beyond.

## Local Entrepreneur Shares Real-World Business Lessons with Students

On December 16th, Brian Green of Allstate Insurance visited Mr. McFall's Consumer and Personal Finance class to share his journey as an entrepreneur and business owner, offering students a firsthand look at what it takes to build long-term success.

Mr. Green explained that his path was not a straight line. While attending the University of Kansas, where he studied business with a concentration in English, he started a lawn care business to earn money. After college, he worked as a sales representative for a Topeka glass company before purchasing his own insurance agency about 20 years ago. Today, he owns and operates numerous businesses, including insurance, metal fabrication, and real estate ventures.

A major focus of Mr. Green's presentation was entrepreneurship. He emphasized that working for yourself means your effort directly impacts your income. Starting and running businesses, while challenging, keeps you motivated, adaptable, and constantly learning. According to Mr. Green, successful business owners learn to think beyond their daily routines, develop strong problem-solving skills, and view problems as opportunities to create solutions. He encouraged students to use technology to their advantage and to take initiative rather than waiting to be told what to do.

Mr. Green also shared insights from his experience owning more than 50 rental properties. He explained that rental properties are a long-term investment, with profits gradually paying down mortgages until properties are fully owned. Creating value through remodeling, partnerships, and hands-on maintenance is key to maximizing profitability over time.

One of the strongest messages from Mr. Green's talk was the importance of relationships. He stressed that relationships with customers, business partners, banks, and the community are essential to success. Building trust, maintaining strong service, and networking can open unexpected doors and lead to new opportunities. In real estate and insurance alike, relationships and service help smaller businesses compete with larger companies and keep customers coming back through referrals.

Through his story and advice, Mr. Green showed students that hard work, problem-solving, and strong relationships are at the core of entrepreneurial success, valuable lessons that extend far beyond the classroom.

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## Guest Speaker Highlights Affordable Housing in Consumer & Personal Finance Class

Mr. McFall's Consumer and Personal Finance students recently welcomed Trina Tyler from Security Benefit, who shared valuable insights on affordable housing and the financial decisions that impact where and how people live.

Mrs. Tyler explained that a common financial guideline is to spend no more than 30% of income on housing. When housing costs rise above that level, it can feel like a "freight train" hitting a household's budget, leaving little room for savings or other essential expenses.

She discussed practical steps individuals can take when housing costs exceed 30% of their income, including cutting expenses, working additional hours, and increasing savings. Mrs. Tyler also emphasized the importance of seeking support from one's community, such as teachers, parents, and grandparents, when facing financial challenges.

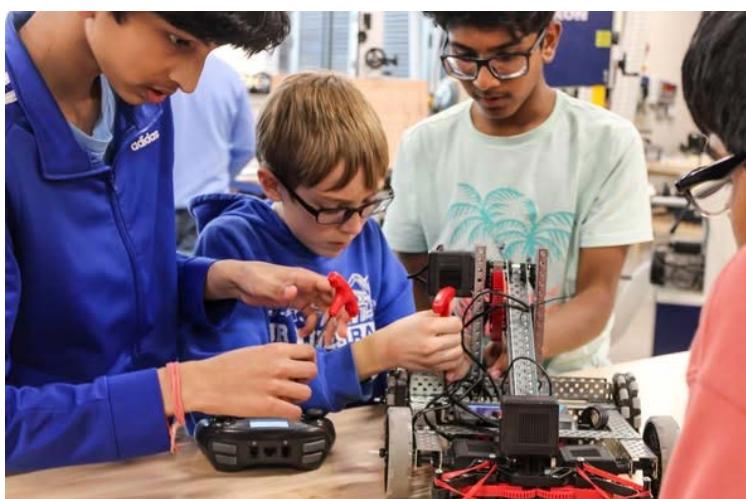
The presentation also explored how zoning laws, commercial versus residential, affect housing availability and cost. Students learned that low-income housing is not necessarily poor-quality housing, and that many housing options are supported through government assistance or provided by nonprofit community housing organizations.

Mrs. Tyler concluded by introducing concepts such as inclusionary housing and the roles of local, state, and federal governments in addressing housing needs. Her visit helped students better understand how housing decisions connect to budgeting, community resources, and long-term financial stability.

## Hospitality & Tourism - Restaurant & Event Management Pathway

**ServSafe Exam:** Twenty-one students in Ms. Dible's Culinary Arts class earned their nationally recognized ServSafe Certificate right before the Winter Break. Congratulations to those students! The ServSafe® program is a national certification program designed to teach safe handling practices to food service employees and others who handle and serve food to the public.

## Robotics Tournament



The Washburn Rural High School Robotics class, led by instructor Dean Gerlach, hosted a robotics tournament for students from Washburn Rural Middle School and Washburn Rural North Middle School at the Innovation Center. High school students designed the game and served as mentors, offering guidance and problem-solving support to middle school students throughout the event. It was a great example of collaboration and hands-on learning in action!

# Career and Technical Education

## Architecture & Construction Pathway



Students in the Washburn Rural High School (WRHS) Architecture & Construction pathway witnessed a historic moment this afternoon as FHLBank Topeka president and CEO Jeff Kuzbel presented a \$10,000 check in support of the program. The gift will directly enhance hands-on learning for students enrolled in residential carpentry, woodworking, drafting, and other architecture- and construction-related courses by funding essential materials and equipment to support their work.

"We are incredibly grateful for FHLBank Topeka's investment in our students," said Auburn-Washburn Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott McWilliams. "This gift strengthens a program that provides meaningful career exploration and industry-aligned skills. Partnerships like this help us prepare students for high-demand careers in the skilled trades."

The gift reflects FHLBank Topeka's ongoing commitment to workforce development and affordable housing initiatives. The organization has championed similar education-to-career models, including its partnership with Metropolitan State University of Denver to establish the FHLBank Topeka Affordable Housing Institute at MSU Denver, which helps address the need for skilled professionals in affordable housing, property management, and resident services.

"Education is an important driver for community growth," said FHLBank Topeka president and CEO Jeff Kuzbel. "As a proud member of the Topeka community since 1932, FHLBank Topeka has long partnered on initiatives that strengthen local development. We recognize the vital role that architecture and construction programs play in preparing high school students for future success and are honored to play a small part in expanding these opportunities at Washburn Rural High School."

WRHS offers 15 career-focused pathway programs approved by the Kansas Department of Education. Nearly 85 percent of students will take at least one pathway course during their time in high school. Architecture & Construction pathway courses are housed in the district's newly built Innovation Center, a 50,000-sq. ft. facility designed to expand career and technical education opportunities for Auburn-Washburn students.

FHLBank Topeka is a member-owned, federally chartered corporation and one of 11 Federal Home Loan Banks nationwide. The organization provides economical funding to member financial institutions, supporting affordable housing, small-business lending, and local economic development. FHLBank Topeka serves 665 member banks, thrifts, insurance companies, credit unions, and community development financial institutions in its four-state area of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma. Its Affordable Housing Program, which celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2024, has disbursed more than \$400 million in grants to create more than 78,000 homes.

If you would like to partner with Washburn Rural High School in a particular pathway, please contact Teresa Golden [goldeter@usd437.net](mailto:goldeter@usd437.net) for more information.

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# Valentines Raffle

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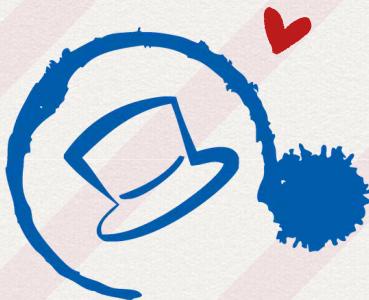
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# SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



## Ada Malmstrom

Years in The Shack: 3 Years

Intended Major: Finance

College: Kansas State University



## Noah Johnson

Years in The Shack: 3 Years

Intended Major: Sports Management

College: The University of Kansas



## Berkeley Kemper

Years in The Shack: 2.5 Years

Intended Major: Business and Marketing

College: The University of Kansas



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