



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 Spring 2021 Newsletter



**...from the desk of**  
**Mandy Dummermuth**  
FJELP President

As we round out the 2020-2021 school year, I want to congratulate each and every one of you for the many adjustments you have made this year. From students, staff, parents and guardians, we have all pivoted a great deal this year. This was a year unlike any other, and yet, here we are turning the corner into summer.

I'd like to take a moment to extend sincere gratitude to our tremendous staff here in Johnston - THANK YOU for your commitment, flexibility, and dedication this year!

To all of our ELP families, we wish you the best this summer and look forward to connecting with you in the fall!

Sincerely,  
Mandy Dummermuth  
Friends of Johnston Extended Learning Program President  
Mom to Emma (16), Audrey (13), & Conner (12)

## 2020-2021 ELP Staff

Molly McConnell	JMS & Secondary ELP Coordinator	515-278-0476 <a href="mailto:molly.mcconnell@johnston.k12.ia.us">molly.mcconnell@johnston.k12.ia.us</a>
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Share ideas for upcoming newsletters, FJELP Facebook page posts, and programs by emailing us at [admin@friendsofjohnstonelp.org](mailto:admin@friendsofjohnstonelp.org).

## ELP Teacher Spotlight

# Colleen Ites

Summit Middle School  
ELP Teacher



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

This is my 21st year teaching, my 10th in Johnston.

### **Why do you enjoy working with ELP students?**

I enjoy watching students learn from the collective experiences and knowledge of others. Guiding students to gain new academic, social-emotional, and 21st century skills, and watching them apply those skills to new content and situations is what I attempt to do each day.

### **What is one of your favorite ELP activities for students?**

I enjoy helping students use their previous knowledge to gain new knowledge, reflecting on that process, and learning how to apply both the new content areas and situations. It is a joy to see students build confidence in their own skills and be able to transfer those skills wherever they choose.

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

I enjoy reading science and history non-fiction and fiction. Some of my favorite reading right now is from Andy Weir, Stephen Ambrose, Kate Quinn, Thomas Friedman, and biographies. My favorite book is Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird." I listen to talk radio and shows like the "TED Radio Hour" and "Science Friday", and enjoy humorous ones like "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!" and "Ask Me Another" on NPR. I don't really watch a lot of TV, but I like old movies – my favorite film is "The Philadelphia Story."

### **Share a highlight of your teaching career**

I don't know that I have a highlight, but I have been blessed with a lot of opportunities. While working on my graduate degree at ISU, I was able to work with the Cyclone Space Mining robotics team and the original C4 virtual reality lab. For many years I worked with the ISU College of Engineering and was able to take my middle school students to the Design Expo, where they were able to discuss design ideas and adaptations with collegiate engineers. I really enjoy connecting student's class work to the real world, showing students the possibilities in their learning and giving them a voice to share that learning outside the walls of the classroom.

**What advice do you give to parents of high achieving students?** Patience is a virtue. Students with high-level learning needs see the world through a different lens than students who don't have those same needs. Many times, students are impatient while learning content 'too slowly,' but often there is essential information found in the PROCESS of learning new information. ELP students in middle school often experience classroom content that is challenging to them in a new way (or for the first time). These students need guidance to learn how to take on challenges, how to break them down into smaller challenges and take them on. I work to help students learn to "Fail Up!" in my room – using failure as a mechanism to achieve success.

# Highlights from the Spring 2021 Virtual Program

Friends of Johnston ELP would like to extend a sincere **THANK YOU** to **Kathy Paul** and **Kelly Bazan** for presenting at our Spring Virtual Parent Program!

Both shared great tips and resources and offered authentic and helpful advice. To hear a full recording of the event, please reference the link and password below, and review the list of recommended books and resources referenced that evening.



***Developing Resilience, Grit & Finding Hope*** - April 19, 2021

[CLICK HERE](#) for Meeting Recording

Access Passcode: 0%12^k&l

## Recommended Listening



(click link in title)

[How Failure Cultivates Resilience](#)  
Raphael Rose, November 2018

[Voices of Resilience](#)  
Amanda Gorman, May 2020

## Recommended Reading



**Raising Children with Grit**  
*by Laila Y. Sanguras*

**Building Resilience in Children and Teens:  
Giving Kids Roots and Wings**  
*by Kenneth R. Ginsburg*

**Grit: The Power of Passion  
and Perseverance**  
*by Angela Duckworth*

**Your Fantastic Elastic Brain:  
A Growth Mindset Book for Kids to Stretch and  
Shape Their Brains**  
*by JoAnn Deak*

# National History Day

## **Congratulations to students from Summit, JMS, and JHS who competed in this year's regional Iowa National History Day competition.**

Johnston schools had a strong National History Day presence, even during this year of COVID. All the following projects were presented by Johnston students at the virtual State NHD competition. Projects that received awards are noted.

### **Summit Middle School**

Jr. Group Documentary:

\*Ahana Devadas, Audrey Dummermuth, Zoe Zhang

\*Henry Zou, Luka Felbapov, Luke Gragg

Jr. Individual Exhibit:

\*Leah Ferguson

Jr. Historical Paper:

\*Charles Berk

### **Johnston Middle School**

Jr. Group Website:

\*Shreyas Shrestha, Andrew Bogue, Kathir Kalyanaraman

***Alternates for National Competition***

Sr. Individual Documentary:

\*Akshara Eswar

### **Johnston High School**

Sr. Group Documentary:

\*Zach Hodson, Ani Soni, Jeffrey Zou

\*Eshaan Chandani, Anjali Kumar

***National Qualifier***

Sr. Individual Documentary:

\*Rohan Devadas

Sr. Individual Website:

\*Anita Dinakar

***National Qualifier***

***Women in History Award***

Sr. Group Exhibit:

\*Dylan Coslin/Kayla Jenson

***Alternate to Nationals***



# High School ELP News

## Graduating with Honors

JHS honors the top 3% of the graduating class with white honor cords over their graduation gowns. In addition to these academic honors, there may be cords or other signs of distinction based upon a student's community service, blood donation, Seal of Biliteracy, and/or student council membership. Each department also awards a medal to honor a student with outstanding achievement.

### Department Awards

Art and Design: Addison Etnier, Mikaela Riggs

Business: Emma Winterboer, Cade Kuennen

Extended Learning Program: Morgan Dunn

English: Mikayla Lies

Family and Consumer Science: Oma Doyo

French: Bernadette Ebambi, Abigail Coon

Industrial Technology: Tyler Kronlage

Collaborative Team: Cale Charlet

Mathematics: Ryan Srail, Julia Chen

Journalism: Mirandah Mangra-Dutcher

Physical Education: Caleb Helgeson

Science: Karshana Kalyanaraman

Social Studies: Jake Wicks/Emma Erdoes

Spanish: Katherine Bui

Vocal Music: Rachel Ruisch

Yearbook: Jordyn Cimmiyotti

### Top 3%

Kimberly Ballard

Hannah Bruene

Ada Chen

Julia Chen

Morgan Dunn

Lauren England

Emma Erdoes

James Grimm

Zachary Harvey

Sarah Hoffman

Karshana Kalyanaraman

Addison Kamienski

Tanner Kenin

Zoey Kloewer

Jennifer Larson

Alexander Lehman

Mikayla Lies

Sophia Longo

Abbie McLaren

Alexa Miller

Emma Podlich

Sydney Ronkar

Rachel Ruisch

Alayna Sinko

James Ryan Srail

Nevada Voss

Ciara Wheeler

Jake Wicks

Emma Winterboer



## Mock Trial

Congratulations to the 8 Johnston High School teams who competed in the preliminary rounds of the Iowa High School Mock Trial Competition! This year, for the first time, the competition was held virtually with teams from across the state. Preliminary rounds were held March 1st – 11th to determine which teams would make it to the state competition.

**Johnston's team Camp Mock 2: The Final Jam qualified for the state competition!**



**The following students were recognized for their outstanding performances as a witness or attorney during the preliminary rounds:**

Rachel Ruisch-12th grade (attorney)  
Rachel Winkler- 12th grade (attorney)  
Dylan McLaren- 12th grade (witness)  
Nic Zimmerman- 12th grade (witness)  
Morgan Dunn- 12th grade (witness)  
Esha Bolar- 10th grade (attorney)  
Brian Zhang- 11th grade (witness)

Tanner Kenin- 12th grade (attorney)  
Julia Chen- 12th grade (attorney)  
Connor Poland- 10th grade (witness)  
Julia Fergus- 12th grade (witness)  
Beatriz LaRota- 11th grade (attorney and witness)  
Maxwell Lehman- 11th grade (witness)

# Johnston Middle School ELP News

Students taking ELP spent the semester designing and creating an in-depth study project of their choice. Projects were based on areas of student interest. Not only did students design their projects, but they also created their own grading criteria. Project topics included: song writing, learning sign language, participating in National History Day, cinematography, creating content for YouTube channels, and various research-based projects.



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**JMS Student 8th grade student Kaylee Jones** was featured on the Podcast: *All Things Mock Trial*, hosted by Lauren Barnes (the 2020-21 intern for the Iowa State Mock Trial program). This was Kaylee's second year participating in mock trial, and her first experience competing in a virtual format. Kaylee's team went on to place runner up in this year's competition. During the podcast, Kaylee (along with Ms. McConnell) discussed her experiences participating in the virtual Mock Trial format for competition this year. **The podcast can be found at [www.Facebook.com/AllThingsMockTrial](https://www.facebook.com/AllThingsMockTrial) and is also available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.** Check out Kaylee's interview on Episode 2!

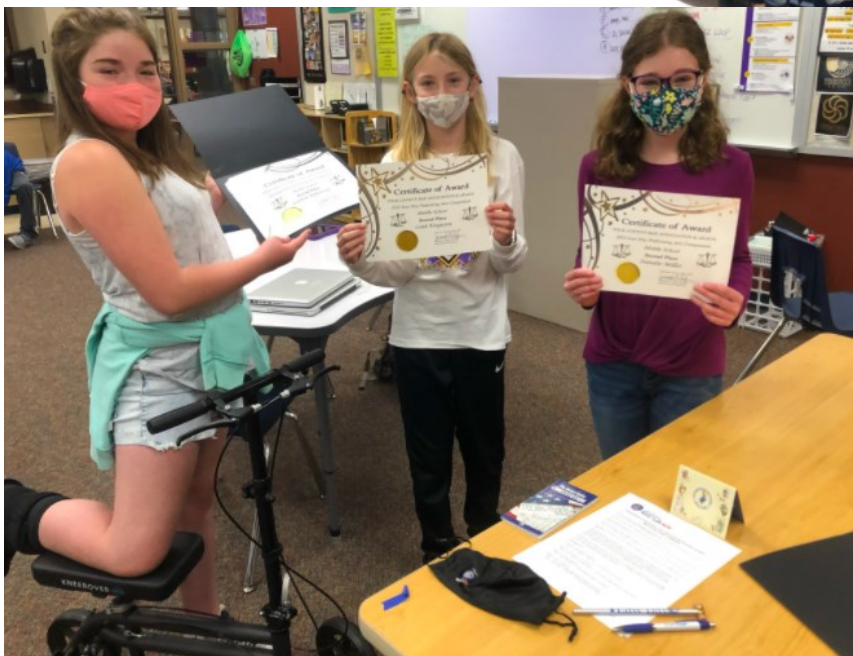


## Polk County Bar Association Law Day Contest Results

Sixth graders **Leah Ferguson, Natalie Miller, and Caitlyn Robertson** were winners in the 2021 Polk County Bar Association & ARAG Law Day Competition. The girls created a video short highlighting the theme "The Rule of Law for All" which was presented to members of the Polk County Bar Association during a Zoom ceremony in May.



**Leah, Caitlyn, & Natalie participate in the 2021 PCBA Law Day Winner's Ceremony.**



**The award recipients with their 2021 PCBA Law Day Winner certificates and swag bags.**

**The students particularly enjoyed the pencils with erasers shaped like a gavel.**



## Summit Middle School ELP News



## Greater Good Projects

This spring, as an alternative to National History Day participation, Summit 7th grade ELP students were offered the opportunity to participate in a **Greater Good Project**. This project invites students to research and develop a project that would impact a community outside of our classroom.

**Lauren Lashier, Summit 7th grader** chose to mesh two of her passions— crafts and aging populations— into an activity at Brio Community in Johnston. Lauren planned and organized an art class for interested residents on March 30th. This was such a hit that Brio has asked her to schedule more classes in coming months! Awesome work, Lauren! See more examples of these GREAT projects on the next page!



# Summit Middle School ELP

## Additional Greater Good Projects

### 6TH GRADE

- **LUCY MINGER**, PEDIATRIC CANCER, ELEMENTARY STUDENT EDUCATION AND FACILITATION OF A CRAFT TO SEND TO BLANK TO CHEER UP PEDIATRIC CANCER PATIENTS.
- **QUINNLYN SCHULTE**, FOOD INSECURITY IN JOHNSTON, REVIVAL OF SUMMIT VEGETABLE GARDEN, INCLUDING COORDINATION OF SUMMIT PEERS, WITH PRODUCE DONATED TO JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP.
- **CARSON KING**, FOOD INSECURITY IN JOHNSTON, NEIGHBORHOOD CANNED FOOD DRIVE WITH DONATIONS TO JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP.
- **ABE PRINCE, CHARLIE BERK, GRACE SAMO**, RECYCLING/COMPOSTING AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND USE OF RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING RECEPTACLES AT SUMMIT WITH COMPOST BEING USED IN THE SUMMIT VEGETABLE GARDEN.
- **PIXI MENDEZ, PAIGE NEIGHBORS, NORA MUNDY**, CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AT SUMMIT, DEVELOPMENT OF GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE (GSA).
- **CAITLYN ROBERTSON**, LACK OF CENTRALIZED LIST OF PODCAST FOR TWEENS, CATALOGING PODCASTS APPROPRIATE FOR AND OF INTEREST TO TWEENS.
- **NATALIE MILLER**, LACK OF AUTHENTIC BOOK REVIEWS BY TEENS, CREATING STUDENT-CENTRIC BOOK REVIEW WEBSITE ON NOVELS POPULAR WITH TEENS AND TWEENS.
- **LEAH FERGUSON**, LACK OF EMOTIONAL OUTLET FOR TWEENS DURING THE PANDEMIC, DEVELOPING A WEBSITE FOR TWEEN REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THEIR LIVES.

### 7TH GRADE

- **CHRIS SWEENEY**, AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS AWARENESS, REDESIGNING AQUATIC REMOTE OPERATED VEHICLES (ROVS) DESIGNS FOR USE IN STUDYING UNDERWATER BIOLOGY.
- **JACK MCDERMOTT**, AQUACULTURE AWARENESS IN CHILDREN, CREATION OF AQUATIC BIOLOGY VIDEO GAME FOR CHILDREN.

### 7TH GRADE CONT.

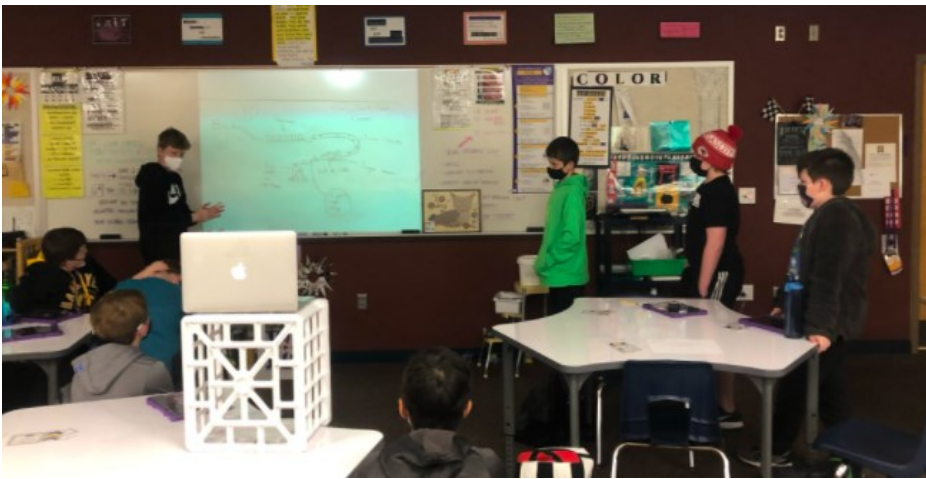
- **CHLOE LIANG, LUCY KIEKHAEFER, EMMA MORLOCK**, ANIMAL ABUSE IN IOWA RESCUE ANIMAL NEEDS, FLEECE TIE BLANKET DONATION FOR CATS AND DOGS AT THE ARL, CONTACTING STATE LEGISLATORS.
- **ALEX OVERTON**, PROTECTING SMOOTH GREEN SNAKES IN IOWA, STILL BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS.
- **ANNA LU**, LACK OF LIBRARY ACCESS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, JOHNSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK DRIVE AND COMMUNITY BOOK DISTRIBUTION.
- **AUDREY DUMMERMUTH AND ZOE ZHANG**, FOOD AND PERSONAL CARE ITEM INSECURITY IN IOWA, CANNED FOOD AND PERSONAL CARE ITEM DRIVE WITH DONATIONS TO THE FOOD BANK OF IOWA.
- **LAUREN LASHIER (ASSISTED BY AHANA DEVADAS)**, ELDERLY ISOLATION DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, TEEN AND ELDER CONNECTION THROUGH SHARED ART PROJECTS HELD AT BRIO.
- **TAYLOR BROWN AND GWEN PAVLOVEC**, STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEBSITE IN CONJUNCTION WITH COUNSELING DEPARTMENTS AT SMS, JMS, AND JHS.
- **ADI ISRAEL**, FOOD INSECURITY IN JOHNSTON, CREATION OF DONATION PROCESS FOR HOME-GROWN PRODUCE FOR THE JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP.
- **KATIE POCHE**, BASIC CARE ITEM INSECURITY IN JOHNSTON, +1 BASIC CARE NEEDS CAMPAIGN WITH DONATIONS TO JOHNSTON PARTNERSHIP.
- **SOPHIE STROM**, ADDRESSING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH (SELF-HARM), CREATION OF AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WITH PROFESSIONAL & SCHOOL COUNSELING REAL-WORLD EXPERTS.
- **JAMES ARMITAGE**, PANDEMIC BOREDOM DUE TO INCREASED ISOLATION, WRITING A SERIES OF 'CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE-STYLE MYSTERY STORIES TO USE AS A FAMILY ACTIVITY DURING THE PANDEMIC.

# Summit Middle School ELP

## 6th & 7th Grade Humanities

The 6th and 7th graders who worked in ELP Humanities groups focused on one of three areas: researching a project to benefit the greater good, researching a passion project in history, or preparing an entry for National History Day. Students working individually and in groups to create their projects, and participated in feedback loops with peers, teachers, and real world experts during the spring. The final presentation of the process was done as a collaborative feedback loop using Padlet.

## 6th Grade STEM



6th graders **Henry Clevenger**, **Connor Dummermuth**, **Jack Okesson** and **Sam Hopper** present their Rube Goldberg component for feedback looping to the class.

6th grade students **Harrison Kurth** and **Ethan Huebbe** work on aligning a section of their Rube Goldberg component.



# Summit Middle School ELP

## 7th Grade STEM

7th grade ELP STEM students worked this spring to better comprehend the challenges of building items for and working in space. This research was supported by a virtual session with Dr. Jason Rhodes of the Jet Propulsion Lab, who was able to speak to students about his experiences designing telescopes and space observatories for space flight. In small groups, students developed robots for a lunar mining base to support further space flight programs using the limitations of the space environment, resources, time, and money as the limits placed on their projects. Robots fulfilled jobs found in mixed protocols of mining, transport, communications, power plant, scientific, and maintenance.



7th grade ELP STEM students participated in a Zoom meeting with Dr. Jason Rhodes from NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab to discuss space science and its impact on their robots.

7th grade ELP STEM students work in protocol teams to build quick-release structures to interchange the 'brain' LEGO bricks in their lunar mining base robots.



# Summit Middle School ELP

## ELP Digital Dragons

ELP Digital Dragons participated in twice-weekly meetings covering social-emotional topics and Core content, specifically the Rube Goldberg projects in STEM and passion projects for Humanities. A small group of students created a Rube Goldberg component for use in one of the in-school class Rube Goldberg machines.

Another small group of Digital Dragons also participated in the all-6th-grade Dragon Boat races the last few days of school.



Sixth graders **Sarah Ruisch**, **Jo Hanson**, and **Breanna TeKippe** work with Digital Dragons **Bri Anderson** and **Maya Keshwani** to combine their Rube Goldberg components into a completed Rube Goldberg machine.

# Elementary ELP

## Math Olympiads

Several students from Johnston were among the nearly **170,000 students worldwide (35 countries and 6 continents)** to participate this year in the Math Olympiad program. They participated in a series of five monthly contests of 5 problems each, from November to March, and weekly practice sessions under the supervision and coaching of the elementary ELP teachers. The students learned to solve unusual and difficult problems and to think creatively.

### The goals of MOEM are:

- \* To stimulate enthusiasm and a love for Mathematics
- \* To introduce important Mathematical concepts
- \* To teach major strategies for problem solving
- \* To develop Mathematical flexibility in solving problems
- \* To strengthen Mathematical intuition
- \* To foster Mathematical creativity and ingenuity
- \* To provide for the satisfaction, joy, and thrill of meeting challenges

The students responded well and all were recognized with certificates for their participation. The first place students from each building earned a trophy. Patches and pins were also awarded to high scoring students.

### Here are the results of our top Math Olympiad participants:

#### Beaver Creek Top 10 (+1 because there was a tie)

1. Braydon McKibban
2. Sam Miner
3. Alex Ren
4. Henry Hill, Brady Laursen, Irene Lin, and Dylan Williams (TIED)
5. Keely Koenigs, Jake Lahey, Isabelle Ryan and Kate Shi (TIED)

#### 4th Grade Digital Dragons

1. Anmol Gonchigar (BC), Leo Howard (TR), and Srihari Kumaresan (TR)
2. Sree Bethanapalli (Wallace)
3. Warren Knake (TR)
4. Gaea Adix (TR)
5. Isabelle Arnold (TR), Sukhmun Chouhan (BC) and Lydia Gerke (TR)
6. Strummer Boone (Lawson)

# Elementary ELP

## Lawson MOEM

1. Henry Gehl
2. Ella Maki
3. Ronan Donoho
4. Drew Goedken, Teagen Goudelock, Carlie Jackson, Carter Ritchie (TIED)
5. Eli Clanton & Sam Young (TIED)
6. Barrett Schiesl

## Wallace/5th Digital Dragons Math Olympiads

1. Hayden Holub
2. Miriam Dvorak, Shanmukh Vallabhajosyula, and Ana Remer (TIED)
3. Camden Lange, Samarth Saggar, and Meredith (TIED)
4. Kaitlyn Gordon
5. Molly Schaffer
6. Krish Bolar and Luke Williams (TIED)

## Timber Ridge MOEM

1. Olivia Havig
2. Ryan MacFarland
3. Adeyln Richards, PJ Deacono, Reese Williams (TIED)
4. Adalyn Bonert
5. Talia Ohr-Rottler
6. Caleb Withers
7. Meredith Kathman
8. Luke Parker

## Horizon MOEM

1. Aydrian Simmons & Alaina Winterboer (TIED)
2. Noah TeKippe & Nolan Thorpe (TIED)
3. Dani Brinkmeyer
4. Tiger Heikes
5. Cohen Burkhardt & Kayden Mattan (TIED)
6. Kellan Bousum

# Elementary ELP

## STOCK MARKET GAME

What would you do if you were given \$100,000? Would you spend it all at once? Would you think about putting some of it in the bank? Some 4th and 5th graders at Lawson, and Horizon have been learning how to invest money so it might grow over time. Through The Stock Market Game, students have been gaining a fundamental understanding of investing.

### Wallace/5th grade Digital Dragons Stock Market Game

1st place (and 2nd place in our whole region of 35 participants): Camden Lange Ended with \$103,876.30

After reflecting what he did well or would do differently if he played this game again, Cam said, *"I felt I invested well, but one thing I would change is I would log on more often and probably spend more money."*

2nd place (4th in our region): Sree Bethanapalli Ended with \$102,908.58

After reflecting what she did well or would do differently if she played this game again, Sree said, *"I feel that I used sources to predict which stocks will go up and which will go down. If I played again, I would change my focus. When I played I wasn't looking at the stocks that often and just left them until the end."*

### Horizon 4th & 5th Grade Stock Market Game

1st place for Horizon and 2nd place in our region for the year-long game:

**Cohen Burkhardt, Kellan Bousum, Nolan Thorpe and Noah TeKippe** ended with \$113,504.70!!!

They made the most money from the stocks from Tesla, Disney and Apple.



The Elementary ELP team reviewed approximately **645 students** across the district to be considered to receive various levels of ELP services. The team reviewed standardized assessments, teacher recommendations, current classroom levels, and parent comments from the survey. We would like to thank teachers, students and parents for their input, understanding and flexibility during this in-depth and lengthy identification process.



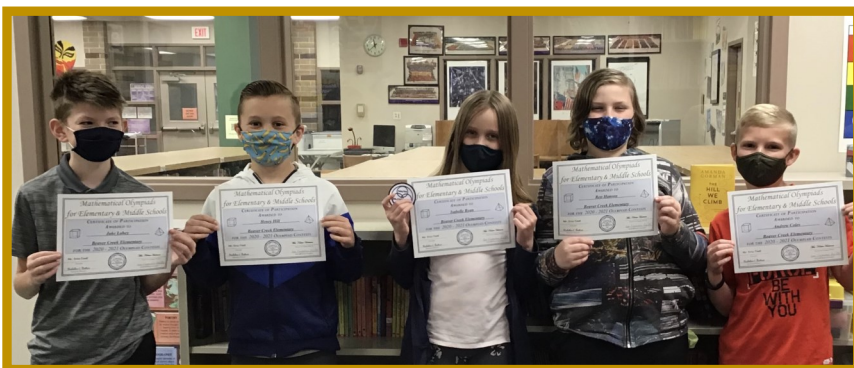
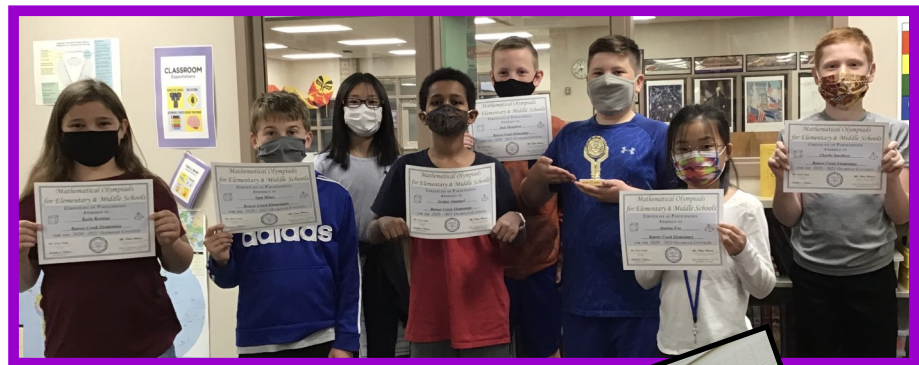
# Elementary ELP

Digital  
Dragons

Engaged and  
Excelling!

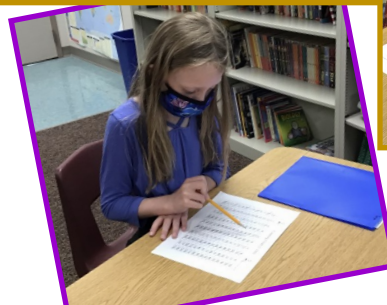
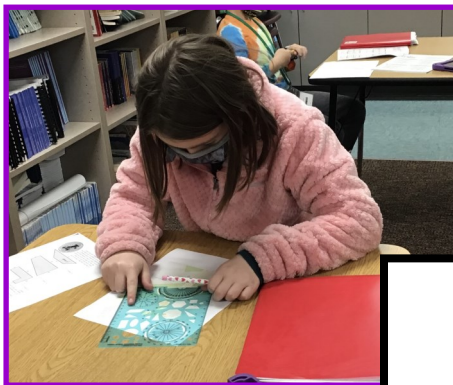
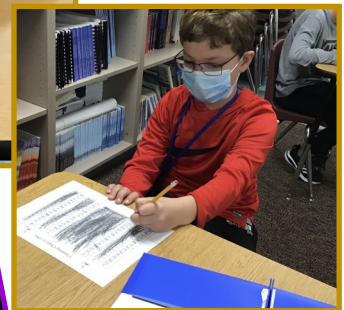
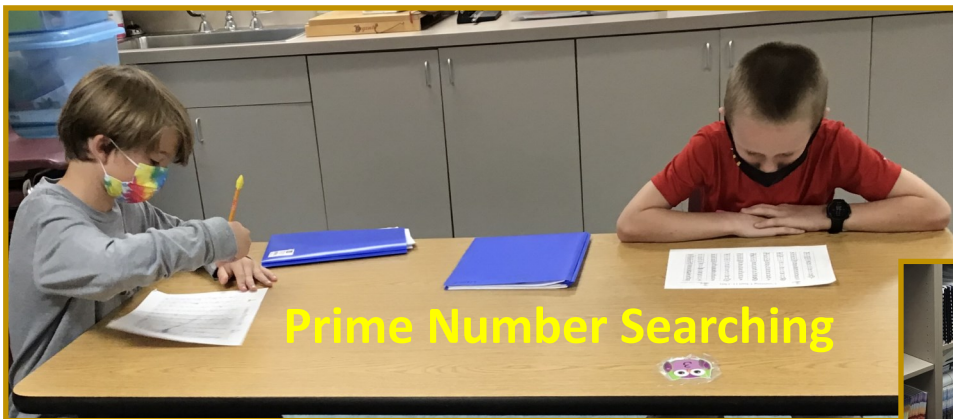


4th & 5th  
Math Olympiads



# Elementary ELP

## Spine Poems



## Measuring Maps



# Summer Enrichment Opportunities

**Thank you to Mrs. Hartman, Beaver Creek ELP Teacher,** for compiling this helpful list of organizations offering summer learning for children!

**Johnston Community Ed**

<https://johnston.ce.eleyo.com/>

**Iowa State University/Office of Precollegiate Programs for Talented and Gifted**

<http://www.opptag.iastate.edu/summer/index.php>

**Science Center of Iowa Camps**

<http://www.sciowa.org/learn/camps/directory/>

**Zoo Day Camps**

<https://www.blankparkzoo.com/education/children--families/safari-camps/summer-safari-camp/>

**Des Moines Playhouse Summer Classes**

<https://dmp.dvlpsite.com/education/classes-and-camps/>

**Living History Farms Camps**

<https://www.lhf.org/events-and-programs/day-camps/summer-day-camp/>

**Des Moines Art Center**

<https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/education/>

**Polk County Conservation Summer Camps**

<https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/education/summer-camps/>

# Ways to Support Friends of Johnston ELP

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

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.

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