



Heat Index

Third Quarter 2012-2013

a quarterly newsletter for the home of the Heat

From Ralph's Desk...

The State of Illinois is in dire financial straits and the situation is getting worse. You are probably aware of the State's financial condition in the news. The good news is, our district has sufficient financial reserves to ride out the financial storm that exists in Illinois for a while longer. The bad news is, no one knows how long this financial storm will continue. The news of recent days does not provide us with much hope.

That is why the Board Finance Committee, made up of Board President, Dr. Lonnie Brent; Board Member, Dr. Roberta Robbins; and me, has made some significant recommendations regarding reductions in the district's expenditures. The district has already been reducing its expenditures for the last three years as the number of students we serve has decreased. The district expenditures are monitored very closely. The alarming declining State level of local school district support will make the Board of Education and Administrative team more vigilant in watching our expenses.

The meeting held last Thursday, March 7, to present information about the Finance

Committee plan, was attended by approximately 30 community stakeholders. As you recall, the district's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget will be a deficit budget of about \$1,150,000. The Powerpoint presentation slides and the Finance Committee's recommendations can be found at www.wc235.k12.il.us. If you have questions about this information, please contact me.

The Board of Education and I ask you to contact our State legislators and to stop the reduction in State funding to local school districts. Please contact State Senator John Sullivan, State Representative Norine Hammond, and State Representative Jil Tracy to express your disagreement about the State's decrease in funding to local school districts. If you need contact information, it is on the district website.

Several weeks ago, I was in Springfield with seven area Superintendents. Our purpose was to talk with our area legislators. The talking points for our discussion included:

- Do all you can to protect full funding of our General State Aid;
- Do all you can to protect our Transportation reimbursement;

- If local school districts are to fund their share of the pension system, make that cost as low as you can for as long as you can; and
- Do not make any more State educational mandates.

When you call your legislators, please refer to these four key points. The time is now to collectively raise our voices for our children. Please contact me with any questions about this situation.

Our entire staff, Administrative team, and Board of Education, are proud of the educational system we provide our students. I know you are as well. Thank you for contacting our legislators and making your voice heard on this vitally important issue.

Yours for better education,

Ralph Grimm



New Performance Standards for ISAT Tests

As your child's educators, we strive to give your student the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to go on to college and succeed in a career.

Illinois schools, including our building, have begun implementing the Common Core State Standards, which outline the skills and content our students must master at each grade level to continue on the path to college and career readiness. These higher, deeper and clearer standards will ensure that our students leave high school equipped with the proper tools for success.

As we focus on preparing students for college and careers, the performance levels of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) must be changed accordingly.

The state has determined that the current expectations for our students in grades 3-8 are too low and do not give an accurate picture of a student's ability to succeed in college and the workforce. Therefore, the Illinois State Board of Education is raising the bar on the ISAT performance expectations in Math and English Language Arts for elementary and middle school students to bring them into line with the Common Core's more rigorous standards.

These higher expectations will cause the number of students who meet and ex-

ceed standards to drop significantly. Some students who previously met or exceeded standards will be classified as needing improvement. However, these new expectations do not mean that our students know less than they did before or are less capable than they were in previous years. Instead, ISBE is simply expecting more of students going forward to show their progress toward college and career-readiness benchmarks.

The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), which is the sister test to the ISAT for high school students that includes the ACT, already provides a good indicator of college and career readiness. Therefore, the PSAE performance levels will not change. Performance expectations for the science assessments will also remain the same until new science standards are finalized later in 2013.

The new performance expectations for the ISAT will provide a more accurate reflection of whether a student is on track for college and the workforce. Our staff will be able to provide the appropriate support and interventions for your student based on the new learning standards at an earlier point in their academic career and thus boost their chances for success beyond high school.

The new expectations also pave the way for the state to replace the ISAT tests in

Math and English Language Arts with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. The PARCC exams will align to the Common Core State Standards and provide better information about students' abilities to master the appropriate skills and content benchmarks for college and careers. Unlike the ISAT, which is given once a year, the PARCC tests will be given more than once during the school year. The PARCC exams will provide teachers, parents and students a clearer, more detailed picture of student's strengths and areas that need improvement. The transition to the PARCC tests is scheduled for the 2014-2015 school year.

Later this year, the state will provide us with information regarding how our students' 2012 performance levels compare to what is expected under the new performance levels. The ISAT data collected this spring will then be analyzed using the new expectations and released in the fall.

Though more difficult, these higher standards will better position students to tackle the challenges of college and careers. And we are confident that our students will rise to the occasion.

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or principal with any questions and concerns. Thank you for working with us to provide a brighter future for your children.



The mission of the West Central Education Foundation is to “partner with the community to make lasting improvements to West Central Schools that will enhance the total educational experience for all of its students”. The West Central Education Foundation Board of Directors invites all parents, families, alumni and others interested in this mission to join their efforts.

The West Central Education Foundation was incorporated in 2009, initially funded with a generous gift from a donor who believed in the value of a comprehensive education.

The foundation provides structure for community support and partnership with District #235. It operates independently from the school District, yet fosters the District’s ongoing efforts to help our students attain an even greater level of success.

Since 2009, the Foundation has provided scholarships for deserving West Central graduates who are furthering their education. In addition, the Foundation has funded other projects requested by certified staff of the district that benefits large groups of students.

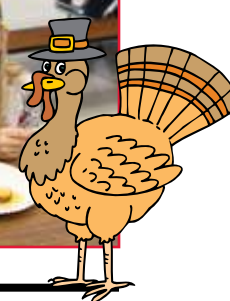
The West Central Education Foundation Board of Directors is comprised of the following volunteers: Tony Griepentrog, President; Robert Dillon, Vice President; Linda Reaves, Secretary-Treasurer and James Blender, Alta Mae Brokaw, Ray Cavanaugh and Chris Cook. District Superintendent Ralph Grimm and Board of Education President Dr. Lonnie Brent serve as Ex Officio members of the Board of Directors.

To make a contribution to the Foundation, you may mail your contribution to the Foundation at West Central Education Foundation, RR1, Box 72, Biggsville, IL 61418 or you may drop off your donation to Linda Reaves at Midwest Bank in Oquawka. As the Foundation has been organized as a charitable 501(c) 3 corporation, all deductions should be tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

SECOND GRADE

Thanksgiving Feast!

Submitted by Stacie Anderson



Operation Santa Another Success!

Submitted by Gina K. Lanning

We had another successful Operation Santa project this year. Many of you probably already know that several years ago the angel project was begun by the School Social Worker, Alyssa Cabrera. Faculty and staff in the district provide family names to the school’s social worker. I then gather information about the children including clothing sizes and wants/needs. The information that is gathered is then distributed to angels in the county. The names of the children and families are kept confidential. The only information that the angels receive is the age and sex of the child as well as the list of items that may be purchased. These angels purchase gifts for children who might not otherwise have gifts under their tree come Christmas morning. More angels then organize, wrap, and distribute the gifts. The Family Outreach Community Center provides the fixings for a Christmas dinner with help from the Stronghurst Booster Club and Lions’ Club. Over the years the program has grown and we help more children and families every year. This year we were able to help 33 families. That’s over 75 students!! We are truly blessed by the generosity of the West Central Staff and community! It is my hope that this project will continue for years to come. If anyone would like to volunteer and be an angel next year, please contact me (Gina Lanning) at 309-627-2371.



FOURTH GRADE

Exciting Electricity!

Submitted by Lisa Johnson



The West Central 4th graders are working on a science unit on electricity. Lisa Lafary an employee of AMEREN came to our classroom and explained her job and then dressed a couple of students in the safety gear she must wear during work. It was an awesome learning opportunity for the students!

Pajama Party!

Submitted by Kristi Lumbeck



4th graders at West Central Elementary collected pajamas in December to donate to needy families instead of having classroom gift exchanges. We collected almost 60 pairs of pajamas! Scholastic Books will donate a free book to go with each pair of pajamas. The teachers delivered the pajamas to Scholastic's drop off site over Christmas break. Way to go 4th graders!!

FIFTH GRADE

All Lit Up!

Submitted by Mrs. Courtois, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Meier and Mrs. Smith

As part of the 5th grade light unit students are focusing on three key concepts.

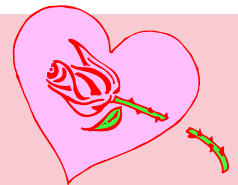
- Light colors reflect more light while darker colors absorb more light.
- Light can be broken into all of the colors of the visible spectrum.
- Light travels in a straight line and can be reflected, refracted, transmitted, and absorbed by matter.

Students were given materials with the instructions to make their light bulb glow and then create a working flashlight.

All thirteen teams were able to make their light bulb glow. Four teams were able to create a working flashlight.



Valentine's Day Celebration



Submitted by Mrs. Courtois and Mrs. Smith

On February 14, Mrs. Courtois and Mrs. Smith's 5th grade class celebrated Valentine's Day by playing games from the Minute to Win It game show. "Stuck on You", "Stack the Hearts", and "Eat without Your Hands" were a few of the favorite games we played.

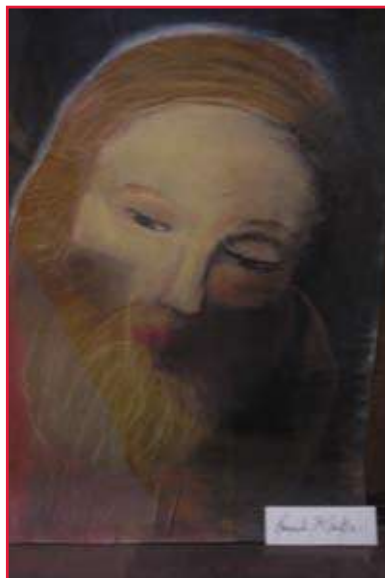
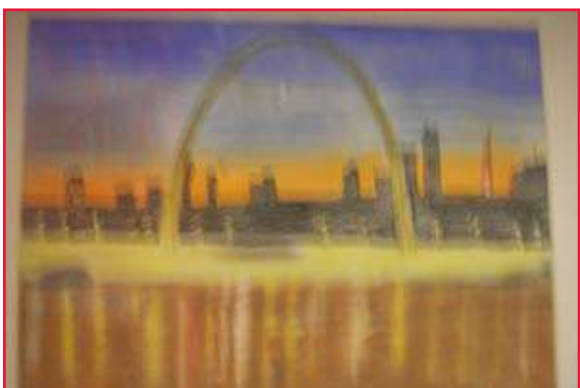
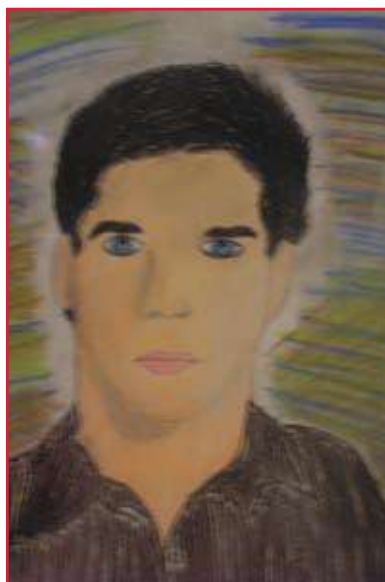


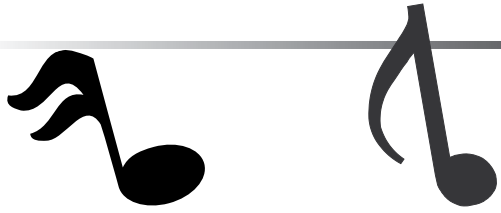
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Amazing Art!

Submitted by Cherry Simmons

Middle school art students have been challenged to use their visual skills in studying lines, shapes, textures, color, color blending, and proportion. Portraits, figures and perspective drawings have been completed with hard work. Fine art skills were the emphasis this year and understanding the Renaissance thought process. A change of pace in creating art in three dimensional form finishes the nine week period. Clay pottery, rattles, and plaster sculptures are being produced to attract attention and communicate ideas. It's a pleasure to hear wonderful compliments about the art the students create.





WCSD Music

Music at West Central

Submitted by Mr. Henning and Mrs. Hilligoss



In September, the West Central Marching Band participated in the Prime Beef Festival Parade. The band placed at the festival and received many compliments about the band and drum major, Megan Johnson, from the judges and other directors. September Heritage Trails at Oquawka was a great experience for the HS music students to perform. The HS Chorus opened the program with several selections, followed solos and ensembles.

In October, Mr. Henning nominated 10 students for the St. Ambrose Honor Band and 5 of the nominations were selected by the St. Ambrose Band Director to participate. These students included the following: Caleb Baker, Cati Gyovai, Megan Johnson, Garret Lefler, and Catlyn Nichols. High School and Middle School students auditioned for the IMEA All-State Festival on October 6th at Geneseo. The Lincoln Trail Chorus Festival was held on October 29th at West Prairie.

On November 3rd the selected 6th grade chorus students attended the JEM festival at Dunlap HS. Singers were Courtney Cochran, Jenna Robertson, Anahi Seabury, Josie McChesney, Emily Johnson, and Brooke Peterson. On November 9th, the WCMS Veteran's program was held. HS /MS bands and choruses proudly performed for the student body and Veterans. The following students selected for the All-State District Festival on November 10 at Augustana College: Band/Chorus--MS Band: Jared Paulus---MS Chorus: Megan Cochran and Kristen Sumpter. For HS Band: Caleb Paulus and Chorus: JoBeth Jones, Carlee Andries, Audrey Vice and Shelli Wilson. The Middle School Jazz Band performed at the Oakland Nursing Home during the school day.

In December, the Music Department had three Christmas concerts. The K-2, 3-5, and Middle/High School Concert all took place. Each concert ran smoothly and the students performed and represented West Central very well.



Kindergarten Music – Christmas Performance



First Grade Music – Christmas Performance



Second Grade Music – Christmas Performance



Third Grade Music – Christmas Performance



Fourth Grade Music – Christmas Performance



Fifth Grade Music – Christmas Performance



Middle School Chorus – Christmas Performance



High School Chorus – Christmas Performance



Fifth Grade Band – Christmas Performance



Middle School Band – Christmas Performance



Middle School Jazz Band – Christmas Performance



High School Band – Christmas Performance

Career Day at West Central High School

Submitted by Alec Hill

It's a classroom during an early afternoon school day.

A small group of students, ranging from the wide-eyed freshmen to the cynical seniors, sit in their respective seats as they are presented with information regarding one of the four careers they expressed interest in. This particular classroom houses Bart Smith, a chef at the En Season restaurant in Galesburg.

"Our concept is all local food. Most to all of our produce is grown from a fifty mile radius of the kitchen, the rest is ordered, but all is 100% organic. So, that means that our menu varies from day to day, depending on whatever food we have on hand."

He paces back and forth in the front of the class as he speaks; the students follow his energetic hand motions.

Bart Smith is just one of nearly sixty presenters -one of whom attended via webcam- at the West Central Career Day. The purpose of this event is to expose students to job fields that they have always wanted to do, but weren't necessarily certain what it's daily schedule consisted of, or just wanted to explore an occupation with an interesting title (like State Police Anti-Drug Task Force). Students, free from the confines of the classroom, had the chance to look ahead to graduation and college through the school's program.

A student asks if Mr. Smith has any advice for future plans, not just in his specific career, but whatever job someone might choose.

"The best thing I can tell you guys, whatever your plans are, is that you should explore. If someone told me that I was going to be a chef, I would've thought they were nuts. My school didn't do anything like this. You guys are young, and this is a great opportunity."

In addition to Mr. Smith, the following companies and/or speakers participated: John Cockrell (Fire Science EMS), Rich White (Accounting and Farming), Brian Randall (Performance Diesel),

Amanda Randall (Accounting), Chris Webb (Brockway Mechanical), Chad Gall (GRMC), Susan Sumpter (Medical Coding), David Stewart (Diesel Mechanic), Laura Anderson (Executive Administration), Angie Stewart (Business Administration), Jason Elswick (Illinois State Police), Troy Coziahr (Monsanto), Ralph Grimm (Education Administration, Entrepreneurship), Dan Hill (Illinois State Police Anti-drug Task Force), Carey Owens (Commercial Fishing/Taxidermy), and Chad Link (Logging). Students were also able to receive information from: Brian Good (Dental), Holly Seitz (Nursing), Jodi Arnold (Paralegal), Amy John (P.A.), Pat Reid (Conservation Office), Joe McCleary (Raritan State Bank), Steve Wisslead (Wisslead Oil), Todd Lange (Chiropractor), Sherri Vancil (Physical Therapist), Jeanie Titus (Nursing Educator), Alicia Siefken (Real Estate), Craig McCrite (General Grind), Chris Talley and Alex Theis (Case New Holland), Grant Gray (Flight Paramedic), Judge Vancil (Lawyer and Judge), Florence Mae Stewart (Child Care), Wendell Parsons (Semi Driver, IAAP employee), Blake Fox and Steve Haynes (County Law Enforcement), CBG Twomey Group, Dr. Lonnie Brent (Pharmacist), Dr. Roberta Robbins (University Professor), Pastor Robbins (Ministry and Aviation), SCC, Dale Allison (The Hawk Eye Newspaper), Gloria Warner (Dresser Rand), KQ92 Radio, Staff Sergeant Caisse (Marines), Dan Potts (Insurance), Cristy Potts (Senior Sales Director, Mary Kay), Kayla Mattson and Deb Anderson (Cosmetology), Deb Cole (Photography), David Peters (Tug Captain), Bryan Ahee (Fusion Tech), Susan Twomey (Director of Buchanan Art Center), Darren Smith (Heavy Equipment Operator), Kevin Kroll (Carl A. Nelson), Robert Eldridge (Bruce Foote Auto Sales), Emily Frakes (AGB of Illinois, Management Information Systems), Elizabeth Cockrell and Eric Dilts (Sustainable Business Center), Lewis McGraw (Taxidermy), Dan Bowman (ADM), Vannie Keever (Computer Technology), Dr. Schar (Veterinary Medicine), Frank Smith (IT, Computers), Richard Clifton (Nursing Home Director), Deanne Brooks, (Western Illinois Special Ed. Coop), Sgt. Dulko (US Army), Stacey Knapp (Medical Assistant), and Jennifer Maynard (X-ray). WCHS Students and Staff want to extend a thank you to all speakers who took time out of their day to share information about their careers.



WCHS Math Team

Submitted by Megan Smith

The WCHS math team went to WIU on Saturday, February 23rd. The math team consists of Whitney Finley, Mikahla Crane, Cati Nichols, JoEllen Keenan, Thomas Lewis, Andy Lewis, Abby Hubbard, Evan Bell, and Colin John. Thomas Lewis received third place in the algebra 2 division and our junior/senior team received 1st place. We had a great time going to regionals and we are excited to find out if our junior/senior team qualified for state at U of I later in March.

WYSE Team

Submitted by Megan Smith

West Central went to CSC in Carthage on February 5th. We placed third place as a team and some members placed individually. Evan Bell received a 1st place in Math, Emily Hopping received a 2nd place in Physics, Haley Willits received a 3rd place in English, Mackenzie Olson received a 2nd place in English, and Sydney Bigger received a 3rd place in Biology. We will move on to sectionals in March at Knox College. We had a great time and are excited about sectionals in March.

Math Department News

Submitted by Scott Schneider

This semester brings new changes to the Math Department at West Central High School. We are proud to welcome Alexis Fulkerson, from Monmouth College, to student teach with Ms. Megan Smith. Ms. Fulkerson will teach Calculus, Pre-Calculus, Algebra 2, Applied Geometry, and Math Lab classes. Math Lab is designed for Freshmen and Sophomores based on their Math scores on the Plan and Explore Tests. For students who struggle to earn their three required Math credits for graduation, the FIRE program meets daily after school to tutor students in Math and other classes that may require more support. Starting January 28th, the ACT Prep Class will help Juniors raise their ACT scores by learning test-taking strategies, taking part in hands-on activities, as well as taking practice ACT tests. This class meets on Mondays from 6-9pm. As you can see, everyone is dedicated to insuring that all students achieve high goals in Math.

Consumer Education "Are You Insurable?"

Submitted by Vicky Keever and Scott Schneider

Jessica Booton visited the West Central High School Consumer Education classes to talk to the students about insurance. Jessica works for Doran's Insurance and Services, Inc in Stronghurst. Her Powerpoint presentation informed the students about auto, home, and health insurance. She received her Bachelors Degree from Illinois State and her Master's degree from St. Ambrose. Because the students are sophomores, juniors, and seniors, they were most interested in the auto insurance area. Jessica helped the students understand what the difference is between comprehensive and collision. She stated that many people think they have plenty of insurance coverage until they have an accident. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable business people in our community who are willing to come to the schools and share their expertise in the classroom. We appreciate people like Jessica Booton for taking time out of her busy schedule to talk to the students at West Central High School.



WCHS FFA

Submitted by Melinda Frakes

The West Central FFA Team recently participated in the 2013 Western National Roundup—Denver Contest.

The team placed 5th overall, 5th in Beef, 6th in Swine, and 6th in Sheep. Jennifer Livermore placed 2nd overall, and was 2nd in sheep, swine, reasons, and 3rd in beef. Sydney Bigger was 4th in beef and 15th overall. Caleb Dowell was 10th in Goats. Other team members were Mason Fullerton, Zane Torrance, and Ben Alexander.

The 2013 Western National Roundup is a National event. We are all extremely proud of the effort and accomplishments of our West Central FFA team.



Science Department News

Submitted by Scott Schneider

The **Earth Science** class has started a unit on our Dynamic Earth. They first learned about plate tectonics and now will explore volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. We will first look at the second greatest eruption in recorded history which occurred at Krakatoa in 1883. The eruption was heard over 2,200 miles away in Australia!

The **chemistry** classes are learning how to write the formulas and names of different compounds in preparation for the next chapter on chemical reactions. Even though we haven't exploded anything as some would like, our experiments have included looking at the colored flames from various elements due to "excited" electrons returning to ground state. We also witnessed the bright light produced when magnesium burns (reacts with oxygen). Physics class is exploring the 2nd of Newton's 3 Laws. Watch out because some of experiments include riding carts down hallways. Newton's second law leads us to explore friction, pressure, and free fall. (Do you really think it was possible for 007 to survive the 95-meter fall in "Skyfall"?)

Biology with Mr. DeWees will be finishing up their unit on protists this week and beginning to learn about fungi. During the protist unit, students were given the opportunities to look at several different organisms including one that causes the disease Malaria. In the fungi unit students will be learning about how different types of fungus are classified as well as their roles in nature. Mr. Ives biology students will be working on learning about plants and their classifications.

Advanced Biology classes have just finished up learning about the nervous system where they got to test their reactions as well as senses during lab activities. They will begin to learn about the skeletal and muscular systems this week. Students will be able to participate in an activity where they learn not only how to identify bones in the human body but also how different joints provide different functions in the body. Students will also be given the opportunity to dissect chicken wings and see just how tendons and ligaments work to provide movement.

Anatomy and Physiology will begin to explore the role and functions of the Endocrine system. This system is responsible for controlling and regulating the growth and development of the human body.

General Science with Mrs. Gall has been building earthquake proof structures. The purpose of this activity was to illustrate how earthquakes can affect buildings and what options do engineers have in order to minimize damage to a building if it is impacted by an earthquake.

Student Council Happenings

Submitted by Dakota Parks and Logan Torrance

West Central's student council sure will be busy this semester. On February 4, 2013 we have Freshman Orientation. This is a time for upcoming freshmen to visit the high school, take a tour of the school with one of our members, and ask any questions they have about high school. On March 1, 2013 we have the Spring Blood Drive sponsored by the Mississippi Valley Blood Center. Student Council members are always very active with this, serving as escorts to help donors back to class, serving refreshments once they have given blood, and generally running any errand asked of them. You have to be 16 to give blood, but that doesn't mean you can't get involved by asking friends and family to swing by the high school and donate! On March 12, 2013 we have Showcase Night. This is a night to highlight the many things done at West Central High School this past year. It doesn't matter if you're in middle school, high school, or out of school, stop by and celebrate with us! Last but not least, we would like to happily announce recycling is back in motion at the high school. Our very own Brad Bavery has stepped up and volunteered to take the recycling to the recycling center. Every Friday, directly after school, our members will be making rounds collecting any recycling the teachers and staff accumulated. Keep your eye out for those and all of our upcoming events! Let's have a great 2013 together!



<High School
IMEA Group



Sixth Grade>
JEM Group



<High School
LTC Choir



High School Band>
Prime Beef Parade



<High School Band
St. Ambrose Honor Band



West Central Community Unit District #235

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