

# All-day Kindergarten program a success

**By Kathryn Burke**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
Going from half-day to all-day classes this fall, kindergarten students at West Elementary are getting twice the education offered in previous years.

The Goodland School Board approved the switch to a full-day program in July after determining they had enough state money to support it.

Superintendent Marvin Selby told board members the idea has been on the table for years, but the district couldn't afford it until now.

The new program required the district to hire two teachers. Rooms in West had to be updated with new carpet, chairs, white boards, tables, teacher desks and computers.

The full-day program has placed about 22 students each in four classrooms. Before the program was extended, the school would have needed only two teachers for two shifts each of kindergartners, morning and afternoon.

The school hired four aides to help out the four kindergarten teachers.

"Thank you to the board for the aides," said Shelly Angelos, West principal, at a board meeting last month. "They are critical to smooth transitions."

The extra students means other classes at West had to make schedule adjustments for lunch and recess.

Angelos told school board members the program is going well so far. The positive response is echoed by the teachers, who say everything is running smoothly.

Angelos said the longer days give teachers more time to cover more information. That helps prepare stu-



Kindergarten teacher Denise White knelt down to answer a question from student Felipe Olivias. Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

dents for the following years of school.

She said the teachers are exploring the new program and learning as they go. They get together for a planning period once a week and

have daily planning periods in pairs so they can spend time every day sharing ideas.

The new program is being broken in by new teachers. Of the four teachers assigned to the kindergar-

ten classes at West this year, three are new to the district.

Angelos told the board everyone at West is doing a great job and students and parents seem to like the new program.

# New teacher not-so-new to town

**By Kathryn Burke**  
*The Goodland Star-News*

One of the three new kindergarten teachers at West Elementary is no newcomer to Goodland or the school district.

Denise White has lived in town for 12 years and has watched her children go through Goodland schools. She even worked for Headstart at Central Elementary for a year and a half.

She quit when she gave birth to twins Berkley and Brianna, now 10. She continued to stay at home until their little sister Kelsey, now 7, started preschool at West with Nona Mason.

White went to work for headstart through the Northwest Kansas Education Center in St. Francis for three years.

When she heard Pat Stindt, a former kindergarten teacher, was moving, she applied and got the job. She was hired before she knew the program was going to extend to all-day kindergarten.

With 22 little bodies in her classroom right now, White said, the atmosphere isn't much different from Headstart. Even so, she said there has been a difference in the work.

"It takes a lot more prep time," she said, adding the older students are more advanced.

A majority of her students, White said, have all gone through Headstart or another preschool class.

As for curriculum, she said the new math program, Everyday Math, is fun for the kids and they like the Animated Literacy reading program, too.

The programs have guideposts and unit review sections that teachers can use to make sure the students understand the lesson, she said. White has to make sure to teach state standards for each lesson, too.

For fun, she said, lessons sometimes include cutting and pasting projects.

White said so far school has been fairly uneventful except for the first few days, when she had all of the students to herself.

Since then each teacher has gotten an aide and she says hers, Katie Bulinski, has helped a lot.

"I've never lost a student," she said, adding that losing track of a student on the playground won't be hard.

She said keeping younger students interested in lessons is a challenge, but a lot of fun.

White thinks of her position as being a guide, helping students along in different parts of their lives.

The hardest part of her job, she said, is keeping items organized and moving from one thing to another smoothly.

The Headstart program she taught was only half-day, but she thinks full-day kindergarten is the way to go.

"I think we can cover a lot more material," she said of having all day kindergarten.

The students, she said, have more academics and time to develop more social skills.

"I'm looking forward to getting the first 9 weeks done, the first semester," she said about tracking student progress. "I have a vision of where I want to end up."

White is a native of Osawatomie, a small town southwest of Kansas City.

She went to college at Kansas State University, where she started out in early childhood education and switched to elementary education before she graduated.

Living in Goodland for so long, White knows many of her students and their parents. Her husband Brandon is a fifth-generation farmer in Sherman County.

White said the other teachers have welcomed the newcomers and offered to share materials or games.

"It's been wonderful," she said. "It's been really, really amazing."

# Tiny students confused by familiar face

**By Kathryn Burke**  
*The Goodland Star-News*

While some of Julie Dautel's kindergarten students still have trouble remembering that she is Mrs. Dautel not Mrs. Julie, the Headstart transfer is happy to be a kindergarten teacher.

Dautel worked at the headstart program in Goodland last year and taught some of the students she has in her classroom this year. Headstart children call their teachers by their first name, she said, and the switch has been a little confusing.

"What will you name be tomorrow," she said one particularly confused student asked. "It was crazy."

Other than the name mix-up,

Dautel said switching from Headstart to kindergarten wasn't a huge challenge. Both are full-day programs now.

"It's a lot the same," she said, adding that the national guidelines Headstart had to adhere to are similar to the state standards for kindergarten.

The small students have short attention spans, she said, so transitions from one activity to another are key.

Her favorite part of the job is her students.

"I love coming in every morning," she said.

Working with the kids, she said, has taught her how important those

first few years can be.

Dautel has some help with her classroom full of 23 5- and 6-year-olds, an aide named Jennifer Reidell.

Dautel's day starts when she arrives at West at about 7 a.m. every morning. She starts her day with a 45-minute planning period.

"I plan for the week," she said.

She likes the Animated Literacy program and started the year by teaching students the letter A. She works with students to teach them numbers and uses the Everyday Mathematics program.

She is originally from St. Francis. She graduated from school there in 1992 and went on to Pratt Community College.

Dautel earned a degree in elementary education from Fort Hays State University in 1997.

After school she taught at Sacred Heart School in Colby for one year. She went from there to substitute teach in St. Francis and later to work for head start there.

Three years ago, she started working for head start in Goodland and applied for a position in kindergarten as soon as she heard about the opening.

Dautel has lived in Goodland for the past four years with her husband Justin, who works for Coca-Cola. The pair has two children Drew, 10, and Dexter, 16 months.

So far, her time at West has been good and she is looking forward to a great year.

"It's nice to be part of the system," she said. "They're very welcoming. Shelly (Angelos, West principal) is just amazing."

# Former substitute settles in to teach kindergarten

**By Kathryn Burke**  
*The Goodland Star-News*

"I love them, they're great," new teacher Stephanie Grippin said of the 23 tiny tots who fill her classroom each day.

Grippin is one of three new teachers in the all-day kindergarten program at West Elementary this year.

Originally from Leavenworth, where she graduated from high school, she went on to Fort Hays State University, where she earned a degree in elementary education in 2002.

Last year, Grippin filled in for Lynette McClain at West, teaching her first grade class while she was out on maternity leave.

She is no stranger to all-day kindergarten, as she did an internship in an all-day program.

"I think that all day is a good thing for the kids," she said. "I think it helps them better prepare for first grade."

These days her job starts at 7:30 a.m., which gives her 15 minutes to

prepare before students file in at 7:45.

They start by looking at the calendar and saying the pledge of allegiance.

Next, Grippin said, she finds out who brought a lunch and who needs to eat at school.

Then she launches straight into learning with a book that introduces her students to the letter of the day.

The students learn how to write the letter and what sound the letter stands for.

For math, Grippin said, she likes to incorporate items like blocks, cubes or coins into the lesson.

The students learn better when they can touch the lesson, she said.

"We've started a new math program," she said, explaining that all of the kindergarten teachers are working with Everyday Mathematics.

She said the program incorporates math into games so students don't even realize they are learn-

ing.

"They love it," she said. Students at West didn't score as high on reading assessments as administrators hoped, so the school is focusing on reading.

Grippin said her students are involved in an animated reading program.

The students, she said, are doing well in every subject.

"I do see progress already," she said.

Working with young kids, Grippin said, they need regular breaks and different things to keep them interested.

She said they have a regular rest time, recess and try to move from task to task pretty quickly.

The kindergartners, she said,

leave the classroom for physical education, music and library lesson.

Grippin said taking care of 23 little ones is sometimes hard, but each teacher has an aid.

Her aide, Brandy Ray, is a big help, she said.

"She's really, really good," Grippin said.

Grippin has her routine worked out, dropping her 8-month-old son Miles off at daycare in town so she can spend time with him on the commute to and from her home in Bird City.

Her husband Morgan is a physical education teacher at the Cheylin Schools.

She said with his after-school coaching—the middle school foot-

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