

The Steward Signal

May 2022

“Steward School District Continues to Offer High Quality Education with a Small Town Approach”



Challenges and Blessings

by Superintendent Simpson

Each school year brings with it fresh promises of hope, learning and growth. Usually, growth and progress involve being challenged to expand our current skill and knowledge base in order to achieve higher competencies than we have had in the past. Often, those academic accomplishments are made possible through the character-building traits of self-discipline, perseverance and hard work. Not only do we emerge with newfound success, we also gain respect for others who display the type of grit and determination that we grow to understand is necessary in order for prolonged attainment of higher goals to occur.

Steward Elementary students faced a variety of challenges throughout this past school year, especially as an international health pandemic continued to have an impact upon their daily lives, both in and out of school. Yet, our students were able to thrive and flourish throughout 2021-2022 due to the blessings of the loving and caring parents, guardians, families, faculty/staff and community members that make up the nurturing support system for our very fortunate school. During this past year, our Steward Eagles have soared to great heights, lifted up by the winds of blessings of adults' loving kindness. Our great hope is that our students will continue to conquer challenges and experience growth in character and wisdom so that they, too, may reach out to help and support others in the same manner as those who have inspired them.

1ST & 2ND GRADE NEWS

by Mrs. Hayes

The first and second graders have accomplished so much this year! They have learned over 1,000 sight words and have continued to work on memorizing all of their addition and subtraction facts.

They also learned so much about habitats, plants, and animals. Both groups have learned how to write stories that are grammatically correct, organized, and interesting. Everyone has grown in spelling by learning the most common spelling pattern found in our language. The students have also continued to chip away at their typing skills. While it is a bit difficult, they understand how vital typing is in today's culture.

For fun, I read the first book of the Harry Potter series as a read aloud to the class. We also performed a reader's theater of the book and noticed the many differences between the 300 page book and the 10 page script! Then, we watched the movie in order to compare and contrast the book with the movie. We were so surprised by how much was changed. These students have all worked so hard and are ready to move up to the next grade level. I am so proud of them.



3rd & 4th Grade News

by Mrs. Swartz

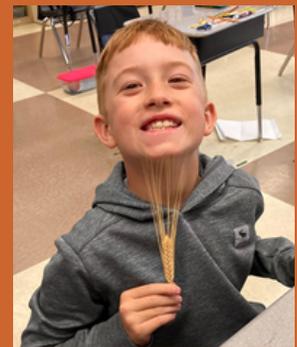
Mrs. Swartz's class had a great time learning about wheat and rice during our last two visits with Mrs. Pratt through Lee County Agriculture in the Classroom.



Wheat before thrashing



We used sandpaper to hull the grains of rice.



This was "bearded wheat" so Crew displayed it where he thought it belonged!

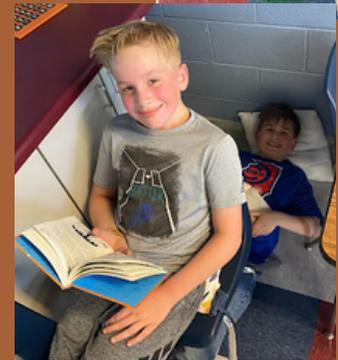
Teaching your children these past few years has been a joy and a pleasure. I will miss them.

5TH GRADE NEWS

by Ms. Kalata

From camping at our read-a-thon, making homemade ice cream, and becoming civil engineers by building bridges out of popsicle sticks, May has been an eventful month for 5th grade.

During science, we enjoyed slicing celery open to observe the workings of the plant's phloem in transporting water from the stem. In addition, our class has done a fantastic job researching and creating presentations about the Great Depression. We've also spent a little bit of time with pre-algebra and reviewing math concepts we learned earlier this year.



We've had an unforgettable year together, and I am so thankful for each student making my first year at Steward so special. These students never fail to put a smile on my face! I have a few more pictures from this year that I would like to share with parents, so I will continue to compile those and share them with you all digitally in the near future.



6th - 8th Math/Science News & Student Council

by Mrs. Odle

Math

6-8th Grade Math: As the year winds down, I'm proud of the progress that our students made in math class. The previous year was a difficult one for many in school with the circumstances that we found ourselves in, but the kids have made great strides this year to get those gaps closed. It's been a struggle at times as we find "holes" in our learning, but the kids are showing their perseverance and determination as we take little "side trips" to review and relearn things before moving forward. I'm very excited for next year as well as we pilot a guided math program in conjunction with our current math program. The guided math program will run similarly to our guided reading program focusing on mastery of core basic skills that will boost both confidence and efficiency when moving to the higher level skills.

Science

6-8th Grade Science: We finished our Science curriculum last week. As a short review, and a little switch of roles, the students have created groups and are going to become the teachers. Each group has chosen a chapter from our Science book to teach to the rest of the class. They also have to create a quiz for the class to see how well they taught their lesson. These kids are very creative, and I can't wait to see them in action.

Student Council

Student Council: As we wrap up the school year, Student Council is going out with a bang! We finished planting the flowers around the school and can't wait to see them blooming with color and school spirit! They also planned a **Family Fun Night** block party-style to bring everyone together for a night of outdoor merriment and maybe a little competition to go along with it. Fun was had by all! Finally, on the last day of school we'll be holding true to the Steward School tradition of taking care of our school. We're excited to be expanding this tradition as well to include the entire town of Steward. Be on the lookout for our students as they walk through the town with trash bags cleaning up the winter trash that seems to collect every year. They'll also be walking along the creek to clean that up, too! We'll end the morning with a picnic at the park and an afternoon of fun activities at the school! Next year, we'll be ready to start on another adventure of fun school-wide activities and community service. If you have any ideas, please feel free to share them with a student council member next August. I can't wait to see what they come up with next!



Family Fun
night



6th - 8th L.A./S.S. News

by Mrs. Stroh

So many great things have been wrapping up in my classroom. This has been a year of many strengths and great resiliency. I am proud of all the ways my students have improved both in and outside of my classroom. We got to experience a great moment when we used the bus to take us out to support a classmate going through a rough time. We also got to go on a whole school field trip to the zoo. The 7th and 8th graders got to learn about different zoological career paths. We got a behind the scenes look at the white rhino enclosure. We also got to see how they prepare the food for all the animals and all sorts of things they do for enrichment for the animals. As for the 8th graders, I am looking forward to seeing them blossom in high school and all the neat things they are going to do in this world.

Reading

In reading, we are working on finishing our nonfiction unit. Students read a few expository essays focusing on the format those stories were written in. We also read "I am a Native of North America" and "Volar: To Fly" which are reflective essays. Students worked to use those stories to reflect on situations in their own lives.



Language Arts

In language arts, students finished their passion pursuit projects. Students conducted research on something they were interested in and completed a research paper on it. Students also worked on a resource page and how to cite sources in their papers. We had students report on firefighters, EMTs, how to open their own gaming shop, geckos, different types of adaptations to animals, how to maintain a dirt bike track, and much more. We are finishing the year off in groups creating our very own children's books.

Social Studies

In social studies, **8th grade** students finished reading about the Vietnam War. They created amazing google slide presentations on something that they wanted to learn more on from the Vietnam War.

6th and 7th graders are working finishing their Unit 5 project. Students are creating their own medieval village. They are working on writing a script in which people talk about where they live and work. And then they will complete the assignment by drawing out their villages.

Art News

by Mrs. Loeffelholz

How can it be the end of the year already?! We've had loads of fun creating together! In Kindergarten, our little guys finished up their American Sign Language art. Ask them about our "See It, Say It, Sign It" song!



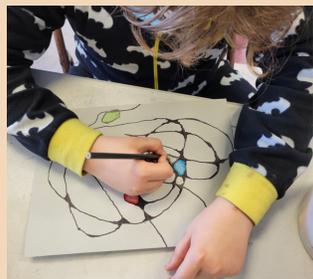
With **1st & 2nd graders**, discussing artist Georgia O'Keeffe inspired our up-close perspectives of oil pastel flowers!



6th through 8th graders found out what you get when you combine a game show with Mrs. L.'s wacky review style: Jeopardy-Art! Our older students searched their memories & the art room for answers to this homemade game meant to confirm knowledge in an unconventional way!



7th & 8th grade also gave Neurographic art a try. Given options to visualize obstacles in their lives, they calmly drew one flowing line, reshaped any hard edges, & used value to shade the shapes made.



Ending artistic results resemble similarities to neurons!

In **5th grade**, we found out how to "upcycle" by transforming paper lunch bags into 3D stars!



Our **3rd & 4th graders** can tell you all about "diffusing" watercolors on their gorgeous Japanese carp kites (traditionally flown on Children's Day – May 5 – in Japan.) They also got in on a little sand art action & discovered varying techniques for layering!



A giant thank you goes out to our community for taking time to view/bid upon our first "Jumpstart My Art" sale creations! **We raised \$200!** That money will go toward the purchase of new art materials for your children.

School Wide Zoo Trip to Niabi Zoo

The school traveled to Coal Valley, Illinois for a day at Niabi Zoo on Thursday, May 12th. Even though it was a 94 degree day, everyone had a very good time. The **7th-8th graders** took a tour about Zoo Careers Tour where they learned about a variety of careers with animals, education requirements, experience needed and how to get it as well as the time, commitment, and dedication needed to work in a Zoo. The **5th-6th graders** took a Biodiversity Tour where they learned about and visited a wide variety of species to help them understand why biodiversity is so important to the survival of life on Earth. The **K-4th graders** took a Cool Cats Tour where they learned what it takes to survive at the top of the food chain while viewing the Snow Leopards, Bobcats, Amur Leopard and African Leopard.





Meet the Staff

Mr. Simpson

BEGINNINGS

I was born and raised in the small central Illinois town of Mackinaw. My father was a WWII veteran of the Army Air Corps who served Caterpillar Tractor Company for 41 years as a manufacturing engineer. My mother was a registered nurse who was allowed to graduate high school early (age 16) to join nurses' training at Bradley University in Peoria, due to the high demand for medical personnel during WWII. I have two older sisters and two older brothers. Both of my parents grew up in Mackinaw, also, and I have relatives in the town cemetery dating back to the 1840's.

CHILDHOOD HIGHLIGHTS

One of the highlights of my childhood was when our hometown threw a multi-day sesquicentennial celebration when it turned 150 years old (1827-1977). Much of our family's recreational time centered around the fun and family-oriented nature of the Mackinaw United Methodist Church, which offered an abundance of family and youth activities and service projects- all of which were highly influential in shaping my core beliefs and values.

EDUCATION

Education was emphasized by my parents as being very important in our lives. They firmly believed that America's leadership in both world wars, and our emergence as the beacon of the Free World in the battle against communism was due, in large part, to the success of our public education system's ability to educate the entire population (not simply an elite portion of it like so many other countries). Over the years I have had the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree from Illinois Central College, a Bachelor's Degree in teaching from Illinois State University, and two Master's Degrees from Northern Illinois University: one in History and the other in Educational Leadership/Administration. Currently, I am working on earning a doctoral degree at NIU. I became involved in the educational profession because I was deeply inspired by family friends and relatives who were teachers, as well as excellent teachers I had in Sunday School and during my K-12 years.

EARLY JOBS

My various jobs included:

- delivering newspapers
- detasseling seed corn
- baling hay
- walking (weeding) bean and pumpkin fields
- drill press operator/assembly in a small factory
- both residential and commercial construction.

Mr. Simpson continued

FAMILY

After I began teaching 7th/8th grade Social Studies and English/ Language Arts in Shabbona, I met my wife, Cheryl, who had grown up there and earned her teaching degree at NIU. She also earned a Master's Degree in counseling at NIU and served multiple area rural elementary, junior high, and high school programs in part-time capacities.

We currently live in rural Shabbona and attend the First Lutheran Church in Lee, where my wife's Norwegian relatives have been members dating back to the 1870's. We have been married for 31 years and blessed with three children: Winston (25), Olin (22), and Bethany (18), as well as an adopted dog, Piper, (2).



FAMILY TRIPS

Some of our family's favorite collective memories over the years involve our many "road trip" vacations in the 1998 Ford conversion van we owned for 17 years. Logging over 200,000 miles, we traveled across our great nation from Gettysburg to Little Bighorn, from the Appalachians to the Rockies and the west coast's Redwood Forest. Coming from a manufacturing family, I enjoy taking my family on factory tours as well. We have seen, among other items, Crayola crayons made in Easton, Pennsylvania, and Ford F-150 pick-ups trucks being built in Dearborn, Michigan. We encourage all of our children to be thoughtful consumers and look for "Made in the USA" products as much as possible!

FAVORITES

Book, Fiction: Across Five Aprils (Civil War novel about a boy from Illinois)

Book, Non-Fiction: Holy Bible

Inspirational Public Figures: Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, John Wesley, Martin Luther, Thomas Jefferson, Helen Keller, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Former US Senators Everett Dirksen (IL) and Barry Goldwater (AZ), NFL Head Coach Tom Landry, Ronald Reagan

Musical Performers: Elvis Presley, Dean Martin, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Roger Miller, Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby

Movies: Ben Hur (1959 version starring Charlton Heston); Rio Bravo; Star Wars movie series; Pollyanna

Actors/Actresses: John Wayne, Charlton Heston, Clint Eastwood, Jimmy Stewart, Katherine Hepburn, Maureen O'Hara

INTERESTING FACTS

My Great Grandfather (x5), William Simpson of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, served in the Continental Army under George Washington during the American Revolution.

When I was in elementary school, one of the houses on my paper route was a former stagecoach inn where Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas both stayed when they rode the legal circuit together through central Illinois.



Meet the Staff

Mr. Hayes

CHILDHOOD

My mom and dad both grew up in the area. My mom actually lived here in Steward and went to Steward School growing up.

I grew up north of Steward on Hayes Road where my grandpa farmed. I am the youngest of five children. I went to Steward School and then high school in Rochelle.

PAST JOBS

- I bailed hay every summer in high school. We had our own hay field and a contract to feed the elephants at Brookfield Zoo.
- built houses with my brother for six years.
- Rochelle United Methodist church in Rochelle as the Children/Youth Director for 12 years.
- Village of Steward's treasurer for the past 25 years.

MISSION TRIPS

Over the years I have been on many Mission Trips to places such as:

- Colon, Panama
- Rose Bud Indian Reservation, South Dakota
- Biloxi, Mississippi
- Obion, Tennessee several times
- Rochelle, Illinois several times

COLLEGE

After graduating from RTHS, I went to the University of Iowa where I majored in math.

After that I went to Parkland College in Champaign, Metropolitan University in Denver, Colorado, and finally Northern Illinois University in Dekalb. I eventually got my Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Economics.

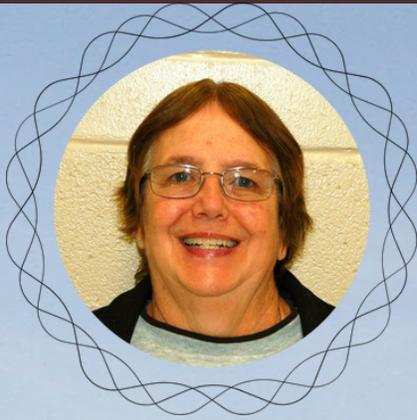
FAMILY

I got married 20 years ago to Rebekah, and the time has flown by. We have two kids Ben (11) and Lizzie (9). We have a golden retriever (Shadow) and two cats (Jack and Annie).



HOBBIES

- playing board games
- swing dancing
- basketball
- ping pong
- frisbee
- doing puzzles
- hiking
- exercising



Meet the Staff

Mrs. Reed

FAMILY

Mrs. Reed has been married to her husband Kent for 45 and a half years. They have four children together: Kathi, Scott & Jeff (who are twins) and Kelly. They have two grandchildren: Aiden (7) and McClane (3).



FAMILY FARM

Mrs. Reed grew up in Steward and still lives on her family farm just outside of Steward. She has a lot of different animals on her farm:

26 rabbits

20 turkeys

40 chickens

10 cats

1 dog

DID YOU KNOW?

Mrs. Reed's birthday is on July 4th, so every year she gets to have fireworks on her birthday.



Mrs. Reed has been a 4-H leader for 30 years!



STEWARD SCHOOL

Martha has been driving the school bus here at the school since 1979! That is 43 years of bus driving! She has also worked at the school as a PE teacher and a Special Education teacher for 17 years. She has really been involved in our school!

HOBBIES

Collecting antiques

Pigs

Chickens

Watching the NFL

Watching grandchildren's sports



EDUCATION



Mrs. Reed went to school at Illinois State University in Bloomington, Illinois. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Education.



Meet the Staff

Mr. Bullock

FAMILY

Mr. Bullock grew up not far from Steward in Waterman, Illinois. He now lives in Steward with his one son who is 18 years old. He is one of four staff members of Steward school who can walk to work everyday.

PETS

These are the pets that Mr. Bullock owns:

2 cats

5 dogs

Dozens of tropical fish

JOB

When I asked Mr. Bullock to list some of the jobs he has had over the years, he said there were far too many to mention. 🧢

HOBBIES

-He enjoys the outdoors

-Fishing

-Camping

-Hiking

DID YOU KNOW?

Mr. Bullock is afraid of clowns. 😬

Upcoming School Events

School Start Date

The official start date of the next school year will be on

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

**Have a great
Summer!**

School Registration

Registration packets will be ready the **first full week of June**. An email will be sent out when they are ready to be picked up.

Certificate of Child Health Examination

Students going into 6th grade

Students entering Kindergarten



Dental Examination

Students going into 6th grade

Students going into 2nd grade

Students entering Kindergarten

