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Golden Hawks claw out win over girls, Page 9



BASKETBALL

Boys widen scoring gap over Mid-Prairie, Page 9



WRESTLING

Shorthanded wrestlers still take second place, Page 10

WEST BRANCH TIMES

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Science

The below chart shows how well River Valley Conference schools, including West Branch (WB), performed on the science portion of the 2022 Iowa State Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) tests. The numbers represent the percent of pupils who earned "proficient" scores in each grade. Fifth, eighth, and 10th grades took the science tests.

	5th		8th		10th
Dur	75	NE	79.4	Ana	72.8
NC	75	Ana	76.5	WB	69.2
Bell	73.2	Tip	72.2	Dur	69.1
Ben	71.4	Cam	71.6	Monti	68.3
WB	68.9	Bell	69.1	NE	68.2
NE	68.8	Wil	68.5	Tip	67.1
Tip	63.9	WB	66.7	NC	66.7
Monti	62.7	State	66.6	State	64.2
MP	61.1	Dur	66	MP	62.8
State	60.1	MP	64.2	Bell	62.3
Cam	57.4	Monti	63.3	Wil	61.8
Ana	52.7	WL	57.6	Cam	41.5
Wil	50	NC	55.3	WL	38.6
WL	48.7	Ben	N/A	Ben	N/A

Abbreviations: Anamosa (Ana), Bellevue (Bell), Bennett (Ben), Camanche (Cam), Durant (Dur), Northeast-Goose Lake (NE), North Cedar (NC), Mid-Prairie (MP), Monticello (Monti), State of Iowa average (State), Tipton (Tip), West Branch (WB), West Liberty (WL), Wilton (Wil).

Source: Iowa Department of Education
Chart by Gregory R. Norfleet/West Branch Times

Test scores rebounding after Covid

One group saw English test scores jump by 30%

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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School administrators said that coronavirus shut-downs directly impacted state test scores, but recent data shows those scores rebounding.

The Iowa Department of Education in September released a full list of the results of the annual Iowa State Assessment of Student Progress. In it, West Branch Community Schools recorded improvements in 10 of 22 testing areas when looking at each grade from 2021 to 2022.

The results show scores within one percentage point in six more areas and drops in the remaining five areas.

When comparing the same group of pupils from one year to the next, West Branch saw nine areas of

improvement among the 16 results available. In six areas, pupils declined and in one area pupils scored within one percentage point of the year before.

"I think the biggest thing that I took away is that our student scores are similar to what they were pre-Covid," Superintendent Marty Jimmerson said. "We had quite a gap over about a two-year time span. So that, to me, is encouraging. We're through the dip that we had and we still are always looking for ways to improve. We never want to just settle. But I think that all the hard work our staff has done over the last few years, we're seeing that come to fruition."

However, should another coronavirus-like pan-

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WB super questions viability of school voucher-like idea

Jimmerson: Funding tight, but \$341M OK for private schools?

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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"The concerning thing is that this is moving so fast," Marty Jimmerson said. "It worries me a lot."

Just days after formal hearings, the Iowa Legislature on Monday

passed Gov. Kim Reynolds' Students First Act with Education Savings Accounts (ESA). The governor signed the bill on Tuesday.

According to Reynolds' office, ESAs could spend in the coming year up to \$106.9 million in taxpayer

funding by giving parents \$7,598 per child to spend on non-public schools.

The dollar amount is expected to increase as eligibility restrictions decrease over the next two years.

Jimmerson, superintendent of West Branch

Community Schools, said he worries less about the short-term impact on the local school district. Instead, his primary concern focuses on sustaining the potentially rising costs of ESAs and how

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Jungle in there

West Branch High School's Christopher Jive and the Uptown 45 performs an exhibition show at Saturday Night Jive with their jungle-themed performance. The event, which serves as the group's largest annual fundraiser, drew 14 schools to the competition, including one from Tomah, Wis., nearly four hours away. Cedar Rapids-Prairie took home the top prize, with Indianola, Marion, Tomah, Linn-Mar's prep team, and Western Dubuque following. Hundreds of people attended and the auditorium was packed for each show. Photo courtesy of Jeff Waller



Remembering Dalyn

Volunteer and former football coach Matt Hills, right, on Saturday shared a light-hearted story about Dalyn Pedersen during a brief ceremony to remember the 2020 graduate who died in July 2021. Dalyn was involved in sports and show choir for all four years at West Branch High School. At Saturday Night Jive, the entire cast of Christopher Jive and the Uptown 45 took a moment to remember him while dedicating the event to a classmate who was "kind, loving, full of humor, and a great friend to many, friendly to all." Joining Hills on stage were Dalyn's parents and grandparents, from left, Jason and Tamia Pedersen, and Deb and Tom Pedersen. Hills told the packed auditorium that Dalyn "will always be remembered by CJU45 and he will always be a part of our family every year. ... Thank you for sharing Dalyn with us and take comfort that he will always be forever in our hearts." Photo courtesy of Jeff Waller

Ernst: How did Biden take documents?

Also, senator hopeful on Farm Bill, and maybe inflation

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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U.S. Senator Joni Ernst called for a security review after lawyers and law enforcement found classified documents in multiple unauthorized

locations tied to President Biden.

She also sounded hopeful that even a split Congress could pass a new Farm Bill and maybe get inflation under control.

Ernst spoke with the West Branch Times after her

Jan. 12 tour of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, stating that Biden's case should be handled similarly to President Trump's case where classified documents were found in the 45th president's Mar-A-

Lago home.

"This is something we just went through with President Trump and President Biden was so aghast at how President Trump could have had classified materials, and yet, here we see President

Biden with classified materials," she said.

Biden's attorneys found documents, dating back to his vice-presidential days, in his Wilmington, Del., home, his garage, and the Penn Biden Center in Philadelphia. The Penn Biden Center opened in

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