Principal's Report

to the

School Board

The proverbial start of school “honeymoon” period is over and the teachers and students are all heavily engaged in the teaching and learning process. Our recent Northwest Educational Association (NWEA) standardized testing results formed a baseline for each student to indicate progress over the course of the year. A summary of these test results is attached to this report.

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for next week to engage in a conversation regarding academic and social progress with each family. A combination of professional observations and evaluations by each teacher along with standardized test scores form the nucleus of these discussions. These important dialogues help form the team of adults to support and encourage each student in their educational experience. We believe that the success of recently instituted programs such as Eureka Math and Fundations are showing up in these NWEA results.

Our Outdoor Program, consisting of all fifth and sixth graders, started their year by learning about navigation while hiking with the Appalachian Mountain Club instructors. They then learned about forest and mountain flora when the Tin Mountain Conservation Center instructors came to visit us. The NH Hike Safe Program was also presented by a member of the local Pemigewasset Search & Rescue Team (me). The students put all of this information to good use on the first two hikes this past month. The Pemi Trail runs the length of Franconia Notch and has lots to offer students who are examining the Notch in a much more detailed fashion than merely driving through it as most of us do. The second hike, to Zealand Falls, saw the first colors of foliage on a spectacular day that just got better and better as the afternoon wore on. We will be hiking the Sugarloaf Mountain trail tomorrow. All of these excursions provide our students with the unique and powerful learning opportunity in taking the classroom outside and integrating reading, writing, science, geography, and mathematics with the natural setting that is our backyard. We are so appreciative of the many parent chaperones that accompany us on these trips. The school could not provide this opportunity solely with staff members and still keep supervision at a safe level.

We held an “active shooter” drill this month and all of our careful planning paid off. The students and staff members performed in an exemplary manner during this drill. Parents, students, staff, and community neighbors were all notified beforehand and were prepared. The Franconia and Sugar Hill Police Chiefs were in attendance as was the Franconia Life Squad. We also had two State Troopers who wanted to know more about how a school handles these types of situations. Please keep in mind that we don’t use the term, “active shooter” but rather
use “school evacuation” as our Lafayette term in this type of scenario. The procedures differ from a fire drill and all staff members know what to do to keep our students safe.

Our Lafayette after-school program is progressing nicely, on several different levels. The finances are in good shape. Parents are quite happy with the plan for each day. The staffs, Gillian Cahill and Hannah Butterfield, are working nicely together to produce a great experience for each student. The recommendation at this point is that the administration and running of this program be kept under the school auspices rather than the Lafayette Recreation Department. Quite frankly, we have more of a vested interest in keeping this program running in a vigorous and vibrant manner.

On October 5th our professional staff attended a workshop on anxiety and depression in children by Lynn Lyons which everyone thought to be quite exceptional. Many thanks to the Superintendents who worked with the North Country Educational Services staff (NCES’s Lori Langlois, Executive Director) to schedule this thought-provoking day-long event. Ms. Lyons presented a rather serious subject with good humor and real-life stories that helped engage the 640+ teachers from around the North Country that were in attendance.

There has been an attempt to remove more metal objects off of our land by our abutter who owns the junk but not the land. Suffice to say, our neighbor did receive the Superintendent’s letter and has re-started the process of clearing the school’s land. We will keep a close eye on the progress.

Thank you for your commitment to our school and community. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding this report or the school in general.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordie Johnk
Principal