The December holiday season was in full swing at our school as we celebrated in a variety of manners. Our Art Classes designed, painted, and installed huge holiday banners for our concert. The Holiday Concert was a resounding success as our students displayed their musical talent in myriad ways. We caroled next door at the Lafayette Center and our sixth graders read holiday stories to our younger students. Our annual Recycle Sale made sure that every student went home with a gift wrapped present for everyone in their family. The spirit of reaching out and giving was exemplified in so many ways. If one is ever in need of some Christmas spirit, just visit the closest elementary school holiday concert and you will certainly leave smiling!

We held our annual Scripps (and the Union Leader Newspaper) sponsored Spelling Bee this month and are proud to share that we had 51 participants in grades 3-6. This group was whittled down to 16 students and then, six students. The spelling words became harder with each round. The last rounds had two students competing for over 20 minutes as they went back and forth, battling for the final, championship round. In the end, Moses Rolfe, a third grader, was declared school champion with Madeline Koehler, a fifth grader, becoming runner up. Moses will go on to the regional and perhaps the state level in competition. A great time was had by all and many thanks go out to Shelley Koehler, Librarian and Enrichment Coordinator, for her efforts in organizing and facilitating this event.

Our Winter Program consists of downhill skiing and snowboarding at Cannon Mountain, Nordic skiing at Bretton Woods, and Winter Fun which includes skating, sledding/tubing, snowshoeing/tracking, and generally having a good time in the outdoors. All of these activities teach students winter time skills on how to stay warm and safe in the northern New Hampshire winters. These life-long activities will hopefully encourage students to stay active and healthy while enjoying the beautiful mountain environment that surrounds us. A bevy of parent chaperones makes this all possible for our students. Every staff member is also involved somewhere on these logistically complicated days. These afternoons spent outdoors are an important part of local children growing up in the White Mountains.

The staff continues to work on the new Performance Assessments for Competency Education (PACE) initiative. We need to show the NH State Department of Education that our local classroom assessments cover the competencies for each subject. Also, that our scoring methodologies are congruent within our school and across the state. All of this is easier said than done. The amount of work that the teachers are putting into this initiative is significant. We will be giving the PACE assessments throughout this school year instead of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests. It is our hope that all of this effort will pay off in improving teaching, learning, and assessing student work.
The heating system is in its second year of operation with more traditional winter temperatures than last year. We continue to learn how the system works when the temperatures get to 0 degrees (F) or colder. We also now know how long it takes to go through wood pellets when the empty indicator system trips (not very long!). The learning curve continues but we are making it work. It will be hard to calculate the energy conservation numbers for our new windows/doors/insulation project because of the new heating system but it is safe to say that the school is more energy efficient overall.

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of our students and school. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding this report or any other school issue in general.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordie Johnk
Principal