Principal’s Report
to the
School Board

Our fall foliage was spectacular this past month and was only matched by the amount of excitement and engagement that our students exhibited around learning in the same time period. There have been some disappointments, such as receiving a “bad” batch of Monarch caterpillars that subsequently did not form chrysalises. Thus, we cannot participate in our annual Monarch butterfly tagging project. The students learned about the cycle of life in a different manner this year. On the other hand, our students were actively engaged in a multitude of activities, all geared towards increased engagement and learning.

Our fifth and sixth grade students continued their Outdoor Education Program experience by hiking three different mountain routes this month. The first hike was on the Pemigewasset Trail through the Franconia Notch State Park. They then hiked the longer Zealand Trail to the AMC hut at Zealand Falls. Last week they hiked the trail to Middle Sugarloaf Mountain. During all of these hikes the students recorded wind speeds, water temperatures, cloud types, while also observing and identifying various flora and investigating different pieces of fauna evidence (paw/hoof prints, habitats, etc.). Students also composed poetry and took notes about their observations in their outdoor notebooks. Taking our classrooms outdoors is a powerful way of making important science, geography, and writing experiences come to life. We will finish our fall hiking schedule with an upcoming trip to Lonesome Lake, also in Franconia Notch. Erica Sieberg and Ben Woo are making every effort in bringing the learning outdoors!

All students participated in this month’s International Peace Day celebration. Students worked in multi-aged groups to design and build a peace mural that currently hangs in our lobby. This mural includes every student’s hopes and dreams for their futures. Students also stayed still long enough for a Peace Day group photo, walked through our Peace Flag Garden, and then saw a Peace Day Slideshow. A great deal of effort went into this activity by all students and teachers. It is our hope that our students will remember that peace starts within each one of us and then flows outward.

Thanks to our wonderful Lafayette Parent/Teacher Organization (LPTO), grades 3-6 traveled to the Hopkins Center on the Dartmouth University campus to see the musical, “The Lightning Thief”. All of our students read this fantasy book, based on a modern day boy who interacts with the ancient Greek gods. The trip was another great example of bringing enrichment types of activities to our students and made reading and learning that much more engaging. While the older students enjoyed this experience, the younger students had the opportunity to each bake a homemade loaf of bread to take home. A great day was had by all, thanks to the LPTO, to Shelley Koehler, our enrichment coordinator, and the classroom teachers who worked hard to make this day a huge success!

Our annual Fire Prevention activity was held with our two local fire departments, Franconia FD and Sugar Hill FD. The Franconia Life Squad and Police Department were also on hand to lend support. Our students experienced how to stay safe at home in the house trailer from the NH Fire Marshal’s office. We even had a
remote controlled Sparky the Fire Dog on hand to entertain and educate our youngest students (I think that the older students liked Sparky, too!). Students learned what a firefighter looks and sounds like in a burning building and to always “go to the firefighter” in a house fire because they are looking/searching for you. The oldest students even got to operate a real fire hose which was greatly enjoyed. Thanks to Kim Cowles from the Franconia FD for facilitating this great fire prevention activity!

Jesse Lyman held his famous U.S. Open Tennis Tournament recently and will hold the internationally acclaimed World Wiffleball Tournament today. These types of activities result in innumerable benefits for students such as getting exercise, understanding and playing by the rules, good sportsmanship, and playing to the best of one’s ability.

Progress Reports were sent home last week and we are holding Parent/Teacher Conferences this afternoon and into the evening. Both of these important communication pieces are integral for student achievement. With the home and school both working together, student success is more ensured.

Our recent full-day Kindergarten survey was received and the results were compiled by the Kindergarten Committee. It shows a strong majority of parents in favor of moving towards offering a full-day Kindergarten program at our school. We will be presenting the budgetary numbers at this month’s School Board meeting. Of concern to some parents and most of the teachers was that the Common Core State Standards were written for a full-day kindergarten program.

Our Building and Grounds Committee continues to work to place and pour the concrete slabs for our wood pellet energy box and silo. We will attempt to have the slabs poured and the energy box delivered. Installation of this system will have to wait until next summer as no bids were generated by contractors to date.

Respectfully submitted,
Gordie Johnk
Principal