Principal's Report

To the

School Board

The start of school was an “interesting” one to be sure. The students were excited, the teachers well prepared, the facility was looking marvelous, the weather was cooperating, and everything was as it should be at the start of every school year. Then, we instituted a change and the rumbling started! To be more specific, we implemented our Responsive Classroom model of meeting our students’ social/emotional needs throughout their day. The classroom integration went smoothly and there were no complaints from students or parents. The “structured” lunch and recess, however, were the issue. As you read in my previous correspondence to parents, we are overtly teaching the appropriate rules and behaviors for each game and piece of equipment on our playground. This type of modeling is a powerful strategy for children to learn how to play at recess without hurting other student’s feelings or getting into arguments regarding the rules of each game. Our goal is to continue this coaching/teaching/modeling for the first four weeks of school and then let the students have more freedom to choose their activities at each recess. As most of our discipline “issues” occur at recess, this new model was chosen by our teachers to give students the best possible opportunity to learn and enjoy recess. After the proverbial “dust” settled and many questions answered, most parents were supporting this change. We look forward to a more peaceful recess period throughout the rest of the year.

The Responsive Classroom model being used in all of our classrooms has gone extremely smoothly. The integration of each student’s social/emotional development with their academics helps engage them more, keeps the class learning environment healthy and safe, and is increasing student achievement. Students can identify goals and expectations, have hopes and dreams for themselves, and are actively engaged in their learning. It has been a wonderful experience observing each classroom’s transition during these first few weeks.

We are conducting online computer testing in both reading and mathematics through the North Western Educational Association (NWEA). The results will help teachers differentiate their instruction to better meet individual student’s learning needs. We will also better determine any curriculum issues through this data analysis. This experience of taking standardized tests online will be beneficial when the spring Smarter Balanced computer assessments (Which replace the former pencil & paper NECAP tests.) will be administered.
Our Outdoor Program in grades 5 and 6 started this month and our first hike will be tomorrow on the Pemi Trail in Franconia Notch State Park. We have had instruction by the Appalachian Mountain Club in map and compass work and Tin Mountain Conservation Center in studying flora/fauna and habitats. Taking our classrooms outside for these studies in science, social studies, mathematics, reading, and writing, is a powerful strategy for engaging students. Our dedicated parent volunteers allow us to leave school on these academic adventures.

The Lafayette staff recently (August in-service) reviewed our three school goals and modified them for the coming year. The new school goals moving forward would include:

1. To improve reading instruction and better understand reading progression among students in grades K-6.
2. Implement social/emotional learning activities in grades K-6 to increase the sense of respect and empathy among students.
3. To form a Math Committee to explore and improve upon instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

We will be using data to analysis these goals and to improve our overall student achievement. Student enrollment did change since last month. The numbers, by grade, are as follows:

- Kindergarten = 9
- 1st grade = 20
- 2nd grade = 20
- 3rd grade = 19
- 4th grade = 16
- 5th grade = 18
- 6th grade = 13
- Total = 115

We had many respondents answer our recent Full-Day Kindergarten Study survey. The results will be discussed at the September School Board meeting. In summary, 73% of the respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that they wanted a full-day program. A more in depth look at the survey will enable the School Board to make a decision whether or not to move forward with this initiative.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our students' behalf. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordie Johnk
Principal