

Principal's Report November 12, 2019

On October 31st we held our first Emergency Planning Committee meeting. We took a risk assessment (recommended by the state) in terms of what are the most likely emergencies to happen at Sharon Elementary. We will use this assessment to prioritize what we need to address in terms of emergency responses. Our next meeting is Thursday, November 14th at 7:00 am in the library.

Friday, November 9th, we held a school wide assembly in honor of Veteran's Day. Two Veterans joined us and discussed their role in the military. One Veteran wanted to impress on the children that most people who serve in our military do not engage in actual combat, but provide other services that add to a productive society. It was a good lesson for our students about the role that the military plays in all of our lives. Each class presented a reading or poem and at the end we all joined together for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Teachers conducted parent conferences on Monday, November 11th.

Our first Trimester will be closing on November 22nd. Teachers are putting together progress reports for parents.

I am currently in the evaluation process with teachers. There are 10 teachers in the formal evaluation cycle. This is the most intensive cycle that requires a pre and post-conference, plus multiples observations and feedback. The rest of the staff is on a self-directed cycle that is less intense but still requires observation and feedback.

Teachers met with our Place-Based Education facilitators. We have developed grade by grade focus areas that are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and Vermont Standards in literacy and math. Each class will have a document to share with parents and community members that will express what students are learning while taking part in Place-Based Education. We will also use this document to inspire other educators in the area to go beyond the traditional methods of teaching to inspire and motivate students to learn. ****

We have been hit with sickness in the school that has impacted staffing. Our night custodian was out for several days, while our day time custodian is on a doctor's order leave until November 20th due to weight lifting restrictions. Teachers have been taking time after school to do light cleaning in their classrooms, while students have pitched in as well, helping with lunch clean up. Our night custodian is back and that is helpful. I think we can manage the daytime custodial side of things until the 20th. But, if it is longer, we will need to find help.

We continue to look for a school counselor. We have posted the job on School Spring. I contacted our "second place" candidate from our first round of hiring and she has decided not to take the job based on family need. I'm also reaching out to local universities that have counseling programs to see if anyone is graduating and may need an internship. If nothing

happens after Thanksgiving, it may be time to consider hiring someone from Clara Martin, or see about the possibility of sharing someone from another school within the SU.

Teachers will be taking a CPR course on Thursday, November 14th.

Discussion items:

PK Roof: Ashley Johnson of Johnson Construction has started the pre K roof project. This will be a big improvement to the building, allowing snow to slide off and not pool up on top of the roof, causing leakage into the building.

Paving and Snow Plowing: I attended a Sharon Selectboard meeting on Monday, November 4th. Jon Harrington from Horizon's Engineering presented paving plans for the parking lot and suggested that the school and town work together to bundle the town road paving that leads to the school and the parking lot paving, to get a better deal. The town is considering this, but does have a lot on their paving agenda already. The town reiterated that they will NOT plow the lot this year.

I am soliciting three bids for plowing this year. So far, Kolbi Walton-Strong has graciously plowed the lot once. I will select the bid to go with by days end tomorrow.

Drainage issues: During the selectboard meeting it was brought up that the school's water build up on the playground is draining into the town library parking lot. The town wants to work together on a solution. Pathways Consulting, who conducted our 2019 stormwater inspection, suggested some simple regrading of the areas to limit ponding on the playground and redirect the runoff to areas along the tree line, away from play areas. They have presented two concepts on how this may work. The town also presented a concept. We agreed to meet about this at a later date as nothing can be solved at this point.

Insulation: I met with Alex Riesterer a local contractor who specializes in insulation work about the kitchen and storage area. For the past several years the water pipes have been freezing. The company that cleans up the mess has just been putting a bandaid on the problem. The area is not properly insulated and needs to be. Riesterer is putting together a quote for me. He has done similar work in Brookfield and knows these types of building well. THIS is an urgent problem as we cannot keep having pipes freezes and leaking.

Literacy Update: We continue to work with Aimee Toth on our Literacy Initiative. We have an upcoming meeting with her on November 15th and again, some time with her on the 18th if desired.

I've received a building and safety report from Mulit-Line, Vermont School Board Insurance Trust. We have some needs on the school playground that need to be addressed. Mostly, the playground is solid, but there are replacement parts that need to be ordered that have a significant cost. I plan to add these costs to the overall budget.

AS for the budget, I think that we have some significant need in terms of buildings and grounds that are high priority. I will work with our business manager to find ways to be cost effective, but I want folks to know that these projects NEED to be done.

**** Sharon is seen as a model for their Place-Based and Farm-to-School work around the region and state. I attended the Wellborn Ecology Conference on November 1st. I was asked to be a part of the administrative symposium where we discussed many items including Sharon Elementary's evolution into a model school. This has taken many, many years to establish starting in 2002 when we began to work on ecological literacy units, and then again when we started working with Vermont FEED in 2005, that eventually led us to Farm-to-School work. Our small school has been mentioned in the Congressional Record in 2007, featured in a variety of online and national articles. WE find this work extremely valuable and will continue to look for ways to improve on what we are doing.