

---

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

---

I am pleased to write this Annual Principal's Report as the new principal of Westford Elementary School. Working at this school has been an overwhelmingly positive experience as I have met Westford's teachers, students, parents, and community members over the past six months. I have found that Westford's teachers are continually engaged in their own professional learning so that they can improve the learning of our students. I have found Westford's school community to be one of strength that helps us deal with practical difficult issues like declining enrollment. What also comes across clearly is our school's caring sense of community. From pre-school to the eighth grade, children at our school are surrounded by caring adults and friends who go above and beyond the call of duty to provide a supportive and enriching environment for Westford's children.

Professional development is an ongoing practice for our teachers. This year we have focused staff training on the integration of technology, improving writing instruction, the use of Power Standards to improve learning, and supporting all learners through the coordination of our Educational Support Team. As we enter the second year of using our new computer lab, we have the support of technology education teacher David Davidson. David supports teachers in all of our supervisory union's elementary schools. He has worked with individual teaching teams and our whole teaching staff at Westford as we look for ways to support increased learning through the use of technology. Our NECAP scores from last year showed that while our students did quite well in most areas, they need to focus on improving their essay writing skills. To address this concern, our teachers have reviewed our test data in order to improve our classroom instruction in this area. Another area of focus for our staff has been a review of our Educational Support Team. We are improving the way we identify and support students who need extra help to meet the standards. All of these professional development efforts are part of our commitment to our school's continual improvement.

One issue that our school continues to struggle with is declining enrollment. Our enrollment in grades K-8 was 227 this past year and is projected to decline to 220 students for the coming school year. While our overall numbers will not have changed very much, we will see a significant change to our enrollment in the 3rd and 4th grades. A relatively large class of 4th grade students will be moving on to 5th grade and a smaller group of students will be enrolled in the 3rd grade. Due to these enrollment shifts, we plan to reduce the number of 3rd and 4th grade classrooms from three to two. This will also mean that we will have one less classroom teacher in grades K-6. This reduction will be made according

---

to the seniority and grade configuration provisions in our teacher's contract. While the numbers tell us we need to make these changes, making the decision to cut a teaching position from the budget is a difficult one. I can tell you that Westford's students are our primary concern when making these decisions. With these changes, our average class size in grades K-2 will be 16.25, which is below our planned maximum class size and near our optimum class size of 16 students. Our average class size in grades 3-4 is projected to be 18.5 students, which, again, is below our maximum class size of 20 students and near our optimum size of 18 students. Enrollment in grades 5-6 and grades 7-8 are projected to be near our optimum class sizes of 20 and 22 students respectively. In the coming months I will be working with school and district staff as we make these changes with the best interests of our students in mind.

A school is more than classrooms, books, and children. There are so many adults on our staff and in the community who enrich our school that it would be impossible to list them all. I'd like to thank the many parent volunteers who help in so many ways such as making presentations to classrooms, chaperoning school dances and organizing events like our ski and ride program. I'd like to thank my maintenance staff for keeping our school safe and inviting. I'd like to thank my office staff for providing help and important information to parents and students on an hourly basis each school day. Finally, I'd like to thank my teachers and staff who continually take their own free time to provide our students with enriching clubs, homework help, and a caring ear to hear their concerns and celebrations.

The residents of Westford have a school they can be proud of! I have enjoyed working with our dedicated staff, supportive parents, and wonderful children. We are committed to our goal of improving student learning no matter what difficulties life may present us. I encourage residents to come and visit our school to see in person how Westford's children are learning and growing.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Wells, Principal

---