



Alton Central School

Principal's Report to the School Board September 18, 2017

Parents had their first introduction to the staff and building upgrades at the “Welcome Back Open House” on Tuesday, August 29. Nearly five hundred parents, students, and community members had a chance to meet teachers, administrators, and staff. In addition, they were able to tour the building and enjoy some light refreshments courtesy of the PTSA. The weather was perfect and it was a great evening to welcome our families and community members the chance to meet staff and tour our beautiful school.

On September 5, the Alton Central School excitedly welcomed 455 students to the 2017-2018 school year. The staff and administration were so happy to greet the smiling faces, and we are already off to a great year. We had a “Welcome Back” assembly on the first day to welcome all of our students back to the building. It was a great chance to introduce all of our administration and ACS staff to our students. Additionally, it was a great time to share the positive direction our building is taking and to review the “Four Be’s” with students and faculty (Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe).

Starting on 9/19, our student in grades K-2 will begin STAR Testing and grades 3-8 will begin their NWEA testing.

At the end of the month, Third and Fourth Grade will be embarking on their project based learning theme of power. They will be exploring ways in which they all have a superhero within them. Fourth Graders will also begin switching for Science and Social Studies classes. This will allow for more sets of eyes on our students and better collaboration.

In 5th grade science students recently completed a lab using milk, dish detergent, and food coloring to refresh their memories about the steps in the scientific method. Additionally, they were introduced to the topics of mass, weight, and density by “floating” a rock. They will be creating foil boats to learn about cohesion and adhesion. In ELA classes, students have been introduced the "Writer's Workshop." Students are using their writer's notebooks for the purpose of identifying story topics and elements (nonfiction and fiction, their choice). Writing conferences will assist students with the process of writing first drafts of the topic(s) they choose.

6th grade recently completed a bubble gum lab where they measured bubbles finding the mean of three trials of blowing bubbles. They also measured the elasticity of their chewed gum. Students also tracked hurricane Irma and made predictions. Classes discussed the importance of making accurate predictions to help prevent the loss of life and property. In Social Studies both 5th and 6th grade students have been developing their geography skills with an initial focus on the theme of location.



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Eighth grade students will be starting the first phase of their Power of One project for Social Studies and Language Arts. They will be connected with modern-day heroes around the world and encouraged to develop ways in which they may use their own power to help others. They will also be focusing on understanding their place in the world as they explore nature writing and the history of our region through a field trip to Knights Pond and Mt. Caverly. In science, 8th Grade will be participating in the Metric Olympics and then completing their own Metric Lab to round out the Metric System Unit. 7th Grade Science will be completing their first large lab with a full formal lab report. They will be looking at New England Soft-shell clams and if a chemical will make them grow. Finally, 7th grade will be practicing research and writing skills while focusing on contemporary issues such as immigration and poverty while exploring concepts connected to the Five Themes of Geography.

In our “Marketing and 3D Printing” elective, students are learning about the “Engineering Design Process” through the construction of simple models and 3D modeling software, building up to a 3D printed product. They are designing a simple tablet/phone stand for the work place. The importance of time and material has been discussed as they decide the value of their product. As products are printed, students critique the form and function, learning to persevere and accept that failure IS an option as they improve their product.

We are really off to a strong start and an exciting year here at ACS!

Respectfully Submitted,

A blue ink handwritten signature that appears to read "John W. MacArthur, Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

John W. MacArthur, Jr.
Principal, Alton Central School