Last week during our Community Meeting, we recognized 23 sixth grade students for meeting the Academy criteria for honor roll. Begun before my arrival, the sixth grade report card and standards follow the Academy model of reporting. We also recognized five students for high honors. This week we will send mid second trimester progress reports home to all fifth and sixth grade students, and to students in the lower grades at the teacher’s discretion.

We are pleased to welcome Ms. Suzanne Ivins to our staff. Formerly an SEA at the Academy, Sue is replacing Rachel Moore in the fourth grade.

Our Winter Program is up and running. We have fifty-one students who have signed up with the Rec. Association for the Dartmouth Skiway six-week program. With the exception of seventeen students, the rest attend the Hulbert Outdoor Center, for which we have 85 students signed up. Thursday, Jan. 25, the Hulbert Center canceled the program due to cold, and presumably icy conditions. While the ski program has scheduled a make-up day for days missed, the Hulbert Center program will end on Feb. 8, without make-up sessions, per prior agreement.

Icy and dangerous conditions on the playground have forced us to keep our students inside during recess. We are hoping for a layer of fresh snow to help alleviate this forced hibernation. I regret to report that we did not have an opportunity to put the skating rink onto the playground this winter. Questions of insurance and not having requisite equipment on hand, put us out too far for proper implementation.

CLiF, Children’s Literacy Foundation, was started twenty years ago. Thanks to the efforts of Joyce Russell, we have received a grant from this not-for-profit organization. In addition to having each of our students receive a free book this spring, we will also be hosting a visit from a children’s published author. Mrs. Russell is in the process of collecting recommendations from teachers now. She will put her request to the organization to check for author availability and then we will schedule our visit.

Gail Keefer, our RA high school French teacher, has been bringing her students by to work with our third graders. This is a win-win situation. We know that when an individual is required to teach something to others, his or her own understanding is reinforced. The French students have made games and activities to introduce students to simple vocabulary. Presented in a simpler version, these types of learning activities have all the benefits of the project based learning approach.