Teachers’ end of year planning is in full swing and we have several activities and events to share. The sixth grade students, parents and teachers are well under way planning their special culminating event. This new tradition, successfully begun by Mr. Christie-Maples and Ms. Klinkenberg, set a high bar for fund raising and quality programming. Funds raised by the students will pay all expenses for this 2 – 3 day event. A final decision on venue and activities for the trip has yet to be determined.

SME and WES fourth grades will be getting together for team building at the Hulbert Center. This two-day event will occur on May 17th and 18th. This year we were pleased to see how quickly our fifth grade came together at SME, no doubt, in part, due to their spring experience at the Hulbert Center. Much credit goes Mrs. Winchester and Ms. Bohakova for their willingness to schedule and organize this worthwhile program.

Our kindergarten and first grade have firmly established the district’s first forest classroom in a grove of ancient pines just up the hill from the Academy. Grant money help to provide rain suits, and our students were well bundled for the cold wind and snow, as they planned their “classroom.” It is replete with a fire pit, seating, and makeshift comfort station. Students and teachers will continue to build their science curriculum incorporating the opportunities the forest has to offer. Teachers also look forward to the first graders taking on a leadership role as they introduce the new kindergartners to the woods.

Last year at this time I reported to you that we had invited a representative from Vermont Solid Waste Management to speak to us about beginning a composting station at school. Our ad-hoc committee’s grant was accepted, and now, under the guidance of Mrs. Rose, our sixth graders, and community volunteers have assembled a composting site behind our gym. It is fully functional and making dirt that will enrich the soil in our school gardens. We are also anticipating the return of Mr. Brett Sweeny, who is volunteering his time to come in and assist the sixth graders as they teach our younger students how and why we compost our organic waste. Thanks to all who have worked hard to make this worthwhile venture part of our educational process.

We are looking forward to our visiting author, Mr. Jim Arnosky. Mr. Arnosky if visiting us under the auspices of CLiF (Children’s Literacy Foundation). He is an award winning author and illustrator. Capturing the magic of the outdoors, his visit will motivate students to read more, and reinforce our own commitment to expand learning beyond the walls of our classrooms. CLiF is also donating new books to our library and to each of our elementary students. We thank Mrs. Joyce Russell, our librarian, for her time and dedication in organizing this event.

We have nearly completed SBAC testing for all students in 3 – 6. This was a time-consuming effort on the part of staff members and students. I wish to thank once again Gabi Martino and Kathy McGowen for their time in juggling a complicated testing schedule and the teachers for their support.