

Congratulations to our graduating ConVal Seniors you have completed your journey here. Whether you are going to a four or two year college, a trade school, the military or joining the work force, you are about to embark on one of the most important journeys of your young lives. You will continue to have grand opportunities and will also experience disappointments and set-backs, but one thing I would ask you to keep close to your heart, your family and friends will always be there to stand by you and support you. Continue to dream, try new and different things, and make a difference wherever you can.

To our 8th graders, getting ready to move on to high school, can you believe that it was only a short 4 years ago that you began middle school. Now you have been to DC, logged countless hours of community service, played in concerts, competed on athletic fields, and probably spent a night or two in the school. Whether you are going to ConVal, a private school or are home schooled, the high school years can seem pretty scary. A few thoughts for you: One, you will be able to find your way through the school and not get too lost, your teachers are very dedicated and will help you, but you need to ask, Friday night football will be a really cool experience, new friends and opportunities await you in ways you could not imagine. Push yourselves to be the best you can be, don't settle, work hard, learn a lot, and continue to give back to the community.

Now on to our new middle school students, I know how you are feeling. I had two children who went to GBS and remember what they were thinking. Middle school is a place where the school is bigger, we move around a lot more, and will I still get my favorite seat at lunch. Yes the school is bigger, but you will mostly stay in one section, you move around for specials, but you do that now. At lunch, you will most likely be able to sit in a new favorite seat, with some new favorite friends. As you leave elementary school, you should remember how much you learned about being a good student, community member and friend. You have learned how to work with others on projects, learned a new math program, and have had some wonderful visitors to share their experiences with you. Take a little bit from each experience and let it be like a blanket to make you feel safe and comfortable when you are feeling a little bit overwhelmed. Your middle school years are a great time to meet new friends from other towns and to experience some of the great things that await you beyond Frankestown.

To our new Kindergartener's and their parents, welcome to our family. Going to school for the first time can be a little like going into the ocean or a pool for the first time, pretty scary. But to the children and your parents, FES is a warm, loving and nurturing place you will call home. Parents, I remember the feelings Carol and I had thinking about the first days, weeks and even months. I can assure you your children will be OK. Transitions are difficult make sure you talk openly with your children. Also, discuss your concerns with your teacher. Stay involved, be supportive and watch your child grow.

Now on to some Board items. The parent satisfaction survey feedback opportunity has closed. I am very pleased to report that the response rates across all elementary schools was 23.5%, and the response rate for FES was 33.9%, the highest in the District. The middle school response rates were GBS 17.9% and SMS 23.1% and the high school was

9%. The average response rate for surveys of this type is between 10-15% so our numbers are quite robust. I want to thank all of you for your active engagement in this process. The results are being tabulated and analyzed and once they are released I will publish the results.

The other survey that is currently being edited is the survey for those of you who have left, or have never sent your children to one of the schools in the District. Your input is also very important as we try and develop a clearer picture of what we do well, and what we can improve. There will be a few more edits and then we will reach out to capture your input. I would like to begin to create a list and would ask that you please send me an e-mail identifying yourself so I will be able to send you a survey. One of our biggest concerns is that we will miss some of you because we do not know who you are. Just e-mail me at sbrock@concal.edu and in the subject line please type in survey. Once we have the survey I will e-mail it to you with instructions on how to return it to the SAU in order to maintain confidentiality.

Another very important initiative is underway. The Board has formed an Ad-hoc committee, the articles of agreement committee, which is required to meet once every three years to review the articles of agreement, and if appropriate make suggestions to amend the articles. The 15 Articles of Agreement serve as the legal framework that guide how the district is constituted, how many representatives each town has as well as other important operational and administrative rules. Article 8 for example, describes how taxes for our local school rate are calculated. I want to draw everyone's attention to Article 5. "The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) shall be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board.

*NOTE 1: An attempt to amend the paragraph to all consolidation of elementary schools was defeated by a ballot vote of 119 Yes, 549 No at the annual meeting held on May 20, 1987.

*NOTE 2: This paragraph was amended by a ballot vote of 3180 Yes, 1210 No, at the Annual District Meeting Part 2, Voting in all Towns, March 14, 2006."

As all of you should be acutely aware, our District has a significant and ongoing enrollment problem. Our parent satisfaction surveys are one way we are working to identify the why behind the trends, but, there has been some feedback from the community as well as concerns about when does a school become too small to maintain the proper learning environment for our students as well as to make good use of our valuable and limited resources. I want to make it clear that there have been no official

discussions about closing any schools, but there have been many individual discussions and the Board feels an obligation to explore options. Nothing can or will happen until there is a change to article 5. There will be a series of public meetings to discuss article 5 and the opportunity to engage the public to hear what you have to say about having a school in every Town. The dates have not been set, but this maybe one of the most important meetings EVER, and I strongly urge you to attend. Once the dates are set, I will publish and send out the information via e-mail, posters and the paper. It is YOUR responsibility to make your voices heard before a final recommendation is put forth by the ad hoc committee which would go to the Board for a final approval and then on to the voters for passage or rejection of any amendments.

If you would like to read the articles yourself, you can log on to the Conval.edu website and click on the information tab, and then select Articles of Agreement. The document also provides you with the any proposed amendments as well as the results of the votes.

If you have questions please feel free to reach out to me anytime. Let's also try and keep the facts out there and not pass along rumors, rumors are no-ones best friend and they will not be productive.

A friendly reminder you can read copies of my articles on Francistown's official web site Francestown-nh.gov? Once you are on the home page, go to the quick links section and select schools, then click on school articles link and you can read the current month's article. I have also had the links to the SAU and School Board loaded onto the website. You can also find out the next time I will be hosting the School Board Representative open house (formally meet your representative night), this will be located under the announcements section of the Town news section of the webpage

Feel free to send me E-mail, at sbrock@conval.edu, or call me at 547-6221 or send you comments directly to my home at 700 Bible Hill Rd.