

Summertime fading quickly, school's around the corner

- By RICK GREEN, THE LACONIA DAILY SUN
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James Moussette applies one of the six layers of wax to the floors of Elm Street School in preparation for the "first day," Sept. 4, in the Laconia School District. (Karen Bobotas/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

- Karen Bobotas



Signs of fall's approach include seeing Joe Lachance mowing the grounds of Laconia's Elm Street School as preparations get underway for the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. (Karen Bobotas/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

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LACONIA — Custodians are buffing tilework, gardeners are mowing lawns and teachers are pondering lesson plans.

Summer days are nearing an end and a sense of anticipation is in the air, along with the smell of new floor wax.

Superintendent Brendan Minnihan is looking forward to the start of the school year on Sept. 4, a day that traditionally brings a mix of emotions.

“I think it’s exciting and nervous,” he said in a conference room at Elm Street School on Friday.

Some students will be going to a new school and that can be a little nerve-wracking. Others can’t wait to see friends they’ve not talked to all summer.

“The kids want to see their new teachers and they want to see their new classes and the teachers are somewhat excited and nervous, both new and veteran,” Minnihan said.

Many teachers have seasonal jobs, including at restaurants, beaches and resorts, but there were also numerous paid teacher training opportunities over the summer.

“I do believe that times have changed in terms of what takes place at a school over the summer, or in a district over the summer, and I’m not positive people realize that at times,” Minnihan said.

There were 20 to 25 days of workshops and training available to teachers over the summer, covering topics from curriculum to computers to classroom management. Administrators also had a two-day working retreat in Meredith.

“The summer is chock-full,” Minnihan said. “There is also extended-year programming. We just got done with a kindergarten camp, where kids going into kindergarten come to acclimate and meet fellow 5-year-olds.

“We have programming for such a big part of the summer, that we come down to crunch time for waxing the floors. They are going to get this wax down today. It takes two or three days to dry and cure, and then teachers will be anxious to get in and work on their classes.”

While students won’t return until Sept. 4, teacher workshops will be held Tuesday through Thursday of the coming week.

When students return, they and their parents will see some new things on the campuses. Security improvements have been made, many more surveillance cameras have been installed and entry points have been made more secure.

Landscaping has been improved on some campuses. Maintenance is being done to brick work at the high school, which also got new front doors. The score board has been improved at the high school. New flooring has been installed at various locations.

For those students who may be dismayed at the end of summer, some solace can be taken in the 2018-19 school calendar. Eleven weeks after the start of classes, the three-day Thanksgiving break begins on Nov. 21 and the winter holiday break runs from Dec. 24 to Jan. 1.