Dear Lafayette Families –

Happy New Year! We have embraced 2015 with enthusiasm and snow shovels! A quick note on winter weather….Our custodial staff does an outstanding job shoveling and salting our building during snow and ice. However, our building is HUGE and we are often outmanned. **If you see it snowing**, **please feel free to bring your shovel and help**! We won’t turn you away! Since last week, we have made sure our snow blowers are full of gas and our salt supply has been replenished. The HSA has even purchased us new snow shovels. Thanks again for your patience with this last storm. The entire city was surprised when the “dusting” turned into several inches. One other weather related note – we will do indoor line-up and/or recess if the temperature drops below 32 degrees, or if there is precipitation.

This past week we were very busy. The 4th grade had the Battle of the Books kick off. Mrs. Fratto and team organize this incredible event every year. For those of you new to the event, students form teams and read several novels. At the “battle” teams compete to answer questions about all of the novels they read, each team vying for the most points. There are T-shirts, cookies, and literary excitement. This year I have challenged the 4th grade to have 100% participation. They have accepted the challenge and are organizing their teams! We are also preparing for the Spelling Bee which will be January 22nd.

In the classrooms, Marcy Cook tiles have taken over! Like Sudoku for kids, students attempt to arrange numbers 0 – 9 in a puzzle to make all the number sentences true. 1st graders – 5th graders are puzzling over these numbers and greatly increasing their number sense at the same time. Classrooms in K – 5th are also taking the middle of the year (MOY) iReady assessments in Math and English/Language Arts. This is a mid year diagnostic check-in for students to track their growth. Third through fifth grade completed these assessments last week on Thursday and Friday. Kindergarten through second grade will be working on the assessments Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. The data from MOY assessments will help teachers design whole-class instruction for the upcoming months as well as create and implement intervention and enrichment support for students.

Thanks to all those who attended our first “Coffee Talk” in December. We had a productive conversation regarding assessment, how it’s used in the classroom, and what it looks like at Lafayette. **The next Coffee Talk is schedule for Friday, January 16th** **at 8:50 am in the Upper Library Room**. We will be discussing “Navigating Change”. As a school, we have many upcoming changes. We will have a discussion about how our staff has navigated the changes thus far, as well as a discussion about how to support students through the changes associated with the new building. Please join us for the discussion.

There have been many questions regarding next year. In order to help our students start to think about this process, I will be meeting with every class during the last week in January. We will be talking about the modernization, the swing space, and what it means for them as students in age appropriate ways. The students are starting to get very excited about the new building and have many questions. I want to be sure that I have the opportunity to start the conversation with each class.

The DC Lottery is open this month, which means that prospective families have many questions about next year. Please feel free to refer them to the DGS website showing our modernization plan (<http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-lafayette-elementary-school-project>) or to me. To help prospective families answer questions about next year, I will be holding an **Open House on Tuesday, Feb. 3rd at 6:30 pm in the Cafetorium.** I will answer questions about PreK, plans for next year, curriculum, the school, etc. Please share this information with any prospective families who may want more information about the 2015-2016 school year.

Before we know it, January will be drawing to a close and we will be headed into February. The month includes no school on Monday, 1/19, a 12:15 dismissal on Friday, 1/23, the start of the 4th grade informances, the PreK International Festival , the end of the second marking term (1/23), and tours for prospective families on 1/20 and 1/27. The classrooms are back in the swing of things and students are settled in for amazing days of learning. Stay warm and be safe through all the icy winter weather.

Warmly,

Dr. B