A look back at the 2015-2016 school year

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Where did the time go?

Today is technically the last day of the 2015-2016 school fiscal year. It's time to close the books and look ahead to 2016-2017.

But first, a look back.

There were a lot of changes in this past school year. Fort Edward Superintendent Jeffery Ziegler decided to step down after 12 years at the district and Corinth Superintendent Daniel Starr stepped down today after a decade. They will be replaced by Daniel Ward and Mark Stratton, respectively. Patrick Dee will be shifting from Lake George to lead Whitehall. More changes are coming as Argyle Superintendent Jan Jehring is leaving in August. William Scott will be pressed into service for another tour of duty as an interim superintendent – coming over from Whitehall.

Schools continued their work integrating technology into the classroom. Glens Falls rolled out its Chromebooks for students. Lake George was in the second year of a three-year phase in of technology.

Voters in two large school districts approved major capital projects. Queensbury residents signed on a nearly $40 million project that includes a large-scale renovation of the high school. South Glens Falls voters approved a $58 million project, which includes a new transportation and operations and maintenance center, additions onto Ballard and Tanglewood elementary schools and the high school, and renovations and site improvements at all buildings.
A proposed $7.8 million project in Argyle was narrowly rejected. School officials are submitting a revised plan before voters on Aug. 2 that breaks up the project into three separate propositions that could total $6.7 million if all are approved.

The opt-out movement continued, though perhaps a bit more muted than before. Some of the anxiety has died down since a four-year moratorium on the use of Common Core state test scores to evaluate teachers was implemented in 2015.

Education advocates rejoiced when the Legislature finally eliminated the Gap Elimination Adjustment – the state aid take back that had to put a crimp on school budgets during the last five years. The big question in the next school year is will the Legislature boost Foundation Aid.

Now is time for a little rest. I will off for a few days around the holiday and returning on July 6 to continue working on education stories throughout the summer and whatever other assignments come across my desk.

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