

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
Rye School District
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Curriculum:

This year teachers and staff in the Rye School District will be taking one last look to ensure that all curriculum is aligned to New Hampshire’s College and Career Ready Standards. (<http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/index.htm>) From the standards, Essential Skills have been written to determine what exactly is needed to meet that standard. You will see these in the classroom as “I can..” statements. These statements serve as the targets of the daily lessons and activities in each classroom.

Some examples are:

- I can read a story, name the characters, and tell what happened. (Grade 1)
- I can use more than one source to read about a topic and compare the information. (Grade 4)
- I can fill in a missing number to make a number sentence true. (Grade 3)
- I can add and subtract single digit positive and negative numbers. (Grade 7)

Parent Information Sessions

The first parent session on Math and Common Core Standards was held in Rye on November 20. It was a joint sponsored event by the Rye PTA and Rye School Board to provide information for parents on these topics. Forty plus were in attendance to learn background on the Common Core Standards and spend time examining the specific expectations in Math at their child’s grade level.

Assessment:

STAR Assessment by Renaissance Learning:

Both Rye Elementary School and Rye Junior High will pilot the first year of STAR Assessments, computer adaptive tests that are valid, reliable and aligned with the Common Core, which will replace the NWEA assessment previously used. STAR is a universal screening of early literacy, reading and math that will be administered three times per year to monitor how student achievement is relative to the Common Core Standards. The assessments will be taken on individual computers or iPads with results available almost instantly after a test is scored. The first administration was completed in September 2014 and results overall were very positive. The percentages for proficiency at each grade level are listed below.

Grade	Reading	Math
K	83%	-----
1 st	78%	-----
2 nd	79%	74%
3 rd	78%	92%
4 th	76%	80%
5 th	90%	95%
6 th	74%	87%
7 th	77%	79%
8 th	83%	85%

Smarter Balanced Assessment

For the first time in ten years, our students in grades 3 to 8 will not participate in the state NECAP testing in the areas of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. This test has been discontinued and replaced with the new state assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment. This assessment will be given in the late spring of 2015. In order to prepare our teachers and students, I conducted training sessions with all teachers and administrators. The sessions consisted of understanding the types of items and performance task components that students will be expected to complete. Different from the NECAP items, these will require students to apply their learning, not just recall specific content. By having this awareness now, teachers can begin to add these types of items on their own classroom assessments in each subject so that students become familiar with the format. Also, teachers will be revising the projects/performance tasks they currently do to better reflect the steps that students will be asked to complete on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

The Science NECAP will still be given in May of 2015 as it is the only assessment available at this time for science. Only 4th and 8th grade students take this assessment. Again, Rye students performed well on this assessment in May of 2014. Listed below are the percentages of proficiency.

Grade	Proficient with Distinction/Proficient	State
8	53%	25%
4	71%	46%

Instruction:

Math in Focus is the math program that the Rye District is using in grades K to 8 to teach the math curriculum. The program is adapted from the math series used in Singapore and is commonly referred to as “Singapore Math”. This math program has a focused sequence to the skills and concepts so there is very little need to review or repeat the learning at following grades. Because of this focus, students are able to move further in their math learning compared to students in other programs. This focus also gives the impression that some topics are too demanding for a grade level, and as students transition into the program they will have the necessary skills to meet the more challenging material. Number sense, basic facts, and computation are the focus at grades K to 2. Grades 3 to 5 have in-depth work with fractions and proportional reasoning. Problem solving is a priority at each grade level and grades 6-8 are learning the underlying concepts for completion of Algebra by the end of grade 8.

Technology is an important tool for access and opportunity for learning. The Rye School District’s Technology Plan is in the last year of a three year plan. The plan will be revised over the course of this year to reflect the best use of technology to support and enhance the learning of our students.

Each grade level team of teachers have been structured as data teams with the purpose of using the assessment information available to plan learning experiences that fit with student need. For example, the third grade level team will look at the results of the STAR assessment for reading and determine what skills the students did well on and what skills the students need to learn. With this information, teachers can plan the lessons so that students are learning what they are ready and need to learn so time is not wasted. The administrators have taken advantage of the free services of New Hampshire’s Department of Education consultants to train and work with the teams.

Pupil Services:

The following is information about areas of Pupil Services that the district supports for certain student subgroups that is required by law and the current number of students involved.

Home Education: These students’ education is provided by parents and not in a school setting.

ESOL; English for Speakers of Other Languages: These students have limited English proficiency due to English being a second language for them.

McKinney-Vento Act: These students meet the criteria as homeless.

Title I: These students are provided instructional support in reading and/or math.

Program	Number of Students K to 8
Home Education	12
ESOL	6
Homeless Education	3
Title I	19

SAU 50 Committees:

Professional Learning Advisory CommitteeThe Professional Learning Advisory Committee is a group of teachers, staff, administrators, board members, and parents whose purpose is to oversees the SAU 50 Plan for Effective Teaching by evaluating the professional development in the SAU, providing parameters for that professional development, and managing mini-grants. The committee will also be reviewing the Learning Compact process.

Induction with Mentoring Committee

The Induction with Mentoring Committee is a group of teachers, administrators, and community members which is established by the SAU Plan for Effective Teaching. Responsibilities of the committee include having clarity on the components of the Induction with Mentoring program, overseeing the implementation of the program, evaluating the effectiveness of the program, planning the summer orientation, and mentor training.

SAU 50 Technology Advisory Committee

The SAU 50 Technology Advisory Committee is comprised of technology personnel, administrators, teachers, and school board members. The purpose of the committee is to create a common vision across the four districts and to establish priorities in terms of technology that will allow the districts to economize resources and be more efficient to support students and staff in their use of technology as a tool for learning. During the first meeting, the group reviewed the status of each district's Technology Plan. The committee will be reviewing the list of priorities previously established by the school boards, updating as needed, and reviewing Technology Plan models.

