

Rye Junior High Overview

Christopher Pollet, Principal

In the era of the new standards and expectations as well as declining enrollments, the Rye Junior High School has appropriately adjusted its program and continued to provide a high quality education with students meeting success in all aspects of student life. Rye Junior High School students move on to both public and private high schools where they are having continued success and are enhancing their school communities.

As educators have stepped into the Common Core State Standards era, our professional philosophy continues to stay focused on student learning around a rigorous curriculum. Our work in Professional Learning Communities has allowed for teachers to look at their work through the eyes of student achievement. Professionals have established Student Learning Objectives for their content areas. As a school, we have identified areas that we feel are important to focus on through the year. Teachers will have set baseline measures for student achievement and check at the midyear and the end of the year for student growth. By looking at data through assessments (STAR Assessments, classroom measures), they can determine student understanding of curriculum and skills necessary to move to the next level or standard. We have formalized our Response to Instruction (RTI) as a way to reach all learners in an effective way. We are looking at assessment results and determining the best way to instruct students in regular classes as well as dividing them by individual needs to offer supports and challenge. We have designated times set aside in each grade to pursue this goal. Our curriculum meetings have taken on the focus of building performance assessments, which challenge students' understandings through demonstration of their knowledge. We set high expectations for all students and believe that every child can and will achieve during their three years here.

Rye Junior High School has worked on a long-range plan for technology to enhance student learning. We continue to upgrade our hardware for students, with the goal of 1:1 computing, where every learner will use a Chrome Book. We have firmly established our school as a Google Applications school. These devices support collaborative learning and the creation of course materials in a variety of formats such as Documents, Sites, Presentations, Spreadsheet and Forms. Classrooms will continue to be outfitted with modern interactive white boards and projectors. We continue to provide online subscriptions that provide teachers with access to digital multimedia as methods of presenting ideas and engaging students in learning. This growth and improvement in our technology department will only improve our student's achievement. Technology is no longer something that is a separate curriculum area or department; it is how we learn so much of what we do as learners and educators.

The library's resources continue to be a focus of our school. Large numbers of students are able to access this research center of our building while students can continue to use the library in a traditional way (borrowing books). Although more limited than in the past due to staffing changes, teachers collaborate with our librarian on lessons that include research and higher level thinking skills. Our library space also allows for an alternative teaching space with different resources for our classroom teachers as it allows for a different configuration of seating, technology and overall climate. This vibrant space continues to allow for students to apply skills across the curriculum areas in a state of the art environment.

Class size has become an issue in Rye as well as most New Hampshire towns. With declining enrollment, we will have to make tough decisions about how to best meet the needs of the students with the staffing currently in the building without compromising the quality of education. Currently we educate 166 students. In this budget, there will be a reduction of staff represented. Our Middle School Structure Committee is in the process of creating the best structure for the future to serve the needs of middle school learners in Rye.

This past September Rye Junior High School, through a final capital campaign and an extremely generous donation of land from Alex Herlihy, was able to make the Wedgewood project a reality. The Wedgewood Project is a land acquisition provided the opportunity that benefits the Rye School District and the entire community. This project was kick-started by two generous donations! Being brought to fruition, the project will expand the campus grounds at Rye Junior High School (RJH) to include two and one half acres of woodland directly abutting the school. The acquisition of this land enables educators to expand opportunities for best practices in education that include both natural places and historical significance. This space will be an outdoor classroom, reinforcing what happens indoors and allowing students to transfer their knowledge into authentic and meaningful work, learning first-hand about sustainability and social responsibility. The property at Rye Junior High School included no natural resources for inquiry-based investigations. The woodlands provided by the expanded campus will allow easily accessible and extensive opportunities for student generated Inquiry-based science (IBS) projects, assessment and management of indigenous and invasive species, the development of nature trails for study, fitness and reflection. The inclusion of physical fitness elements for health and wellness challenges will further invite students to learn from and enjoy the outdoors.

Rye Junior High School has worked to reach out to the community of Rye in many ways. Our Harvest Festival culminates a year with our community garden as we have parents and community members into our building for a night of food, education and dancing. Our connection with the Rye Historical Society allows students to better know the history of the town of Rye through visits to the RHS and guest speakers in their classrooms. The Police Department sends officers in to talk about challenges facing students in our society such as cyber-bullying, harassment and other difficult topics. Project Safeguard brings seventh graders and their parents to the Rye Congregational Church for a day of workshops on all the issues facing students and parents in today's world. We continue to support several organizations with charity efforts such as the Seacoast Food Pantry, End 68 Hours of Hunger, Crossroads House and Toys Bank with the Rye Fire Department. The Goss Farm Collaborative gets our support with planting and harvesting in the spring and fall.

Our interscholastic sports teams and extra-curricular activities are big draws for the student population. Our interscholastic sports teams include anywhere from 40-60 percent of our students depending on the seasons. Our teams are competitive and known for their sportsmanship during all seasons. Our clubs and activities offer students' outlets for their personal pursuits from Math Counts to Art Club to our Drama Club students are engaged in meaningful activities with peers and great advisors.

The Rye Education Foundation and Rye PTA continue to be strong partners and supporters of the educational efforts at Rye Junior High School. These partnerships have brought about increased opportunities for all students and we thank the volunteers of these organizations for their tireless support

To help foster a well-rounded education, the Rye Junior High School includes a wide variety of educational, community minded and extra-curricular programs that enrich and push all types of learners. We have accepted the challenge presented by the changing world and our students are flourishing now and for the years to come because of the design of our school and the tremendous professionals who guide them.

DESCRIPTION	Amount			Rationale for Expenditure	Anticipated Impact in Improving Instruction, Curriculum, Assessment, or Professional Development	
	2014	2015	2016			2017
Curriculum						
Star Assessment	0	2500	2500*	2500*	2500	Better understanding of student skills levels (Cost is based on per pupil cost)
Social Studies Books					5400	Curriculum Alignment will result in better integration and meaningful
Technology						
Smartboard and Mounted Projectors	7998	0	7998	7998	0	Allow for modern programming in classrooms These devices easily allow us to integrate Google applications into our classroom programming and reduce server needs
Chrome Books	19495	19495	19495	19495	16385	Device choice by prior IT Director allows for better lesson planning and presentations
Mac Book Air	0	10000	10000	10000	5915	Support teacher laptops out of warranty
Aerohive Access Points	0	0	0	0	10600	Improve capacity for SBAC testing
Maintenance						
Engineering plan	Unknown				Unknown	To come up with a plan for the sinking floor in the main hallway
Security System	MO	Subscription Cost	Subscription Cost	Subscription Cost		Front entrance has poor visibility
Carpeting	MO					Original carpeting from 1996
Gym Chairs	1699	1699	1699	1588	1588	To update worn out chairs
Electrical Upgrade	1494	1500	1500	1500	0	Several rooms are not accessible due to location of electrical
CopSync911	0	0	0	900	1200	Allows for support of emergency response in our school Protecting our students and staff