

## **Rye Junior High Transition Model for 2016-17**

Due to declining enrollments, increasing per pupil costs and small class sizes, the Rye School District, with a particular focus on Rye Junior High School, undertook a process that will culminate with a plan for education that will be based on best practices, meet the needs of Rye's students and be fiscally responsible for the citizens of Rye. This past summer, the Rye School Board approved the "Vision for Education in Rye" which outlines those skills and abilities we expect all students to leave our district possessing.

The second paragraph of "A Vision for Education in Rye" was the focal point for the discussions by the Middle School Structure Committee.

*"Rye students have a deep understanding of the major concepts in all content areas and are able to apply that learning into new situations. Students are well-prepared to enter the next level of their education because they have been meaningfully challenged and well-educated. They possess strong research and critical thinking skills allowing them to investigate and solve complex problems. They are able to communicate effectively using a variety of media, especially written and oral. Rye students use technology effectively to support and demonstrate their learning across all content areas."*

The 2016-2017 School Budget put forth by the Rye School Board includes the reduction of 2.0 FTE's (Full Time Equivalents). The Middle School Structure Committee has been working diligently to define what the best practices are that should be employed in the school going forward.

Various models were given to the staff over a month ago which allowed all to consider the possibilities. Each model would affect different departments and all the professionals in the building. Many of which would affect faculty members employment; whether individuals would have jobs or their jobs would be reduced.

Many faculty did a site visit to King Middle School which re-energized the desire to focus effort on grade level or school wide project based learning. This spawned the position of the faculty members on the Middle School Structure Committee below with input from staff:

*Below are the qualities that we see as essential to meet the vision statement for a Rye education. The RJH staff members on this committee feel the administrators should move forward in the decision making process in regard to staffing and schedule which meet the budgetary guidelines set forth from the Rye School Board.*

### **Overarching**

*Students who are engaged learners and are able to identify and solve authentic problems.*

*Students who are good citizens and care about each other.*

*Competency based educational model for academics and habits of mind*

*Project based learning that incorporates performance assessments*

**Administrators**

*Schedule that allows for planning, refining, and data review.*

*Budgetary support for projects*

*Providing professional development*

*Support and promote collaborative, effective teaching practice (Evaluate)*

**Teachers**

*Competency based grading and reporting model*

*Blended learning*

*Technology—creating work, student information system that supports competency education*

*Teachers invested and unified toward a common goal.*

*Positive energy!*

*Participate in professional development opportunities.*

*Support each other in good teaching practices*

**Students**

*Personalized learning plans*

*Kids learning most effectively which leads to becoming productive, responsible adults*

**Community**

*Supports the ongoing process to achieve excellence in schools*

*Budgetary support*

*Willingness to participate and promote school endeavors*

*Support innovative programs and progressive educational practices as they are developing*

We have worked over the several model options and schedules associated with them to ensure that the school would be able to carry out the Vision and Committee statement. Whatever model put in place would require serious collaboration among all staff members, changes in the way students are instructed and the way that all programs would be implemented.

The final decision made should not require anyone else to lose their job or potentially reduce their job. Of course, faculty may decide that they do not want to teach in this model and may choose to pursue other options. This model will balance teaching responsibilities even more than this year. This model will greatly change teaching responsibilities but will be in line with the RJH teacher committee member's qualities outlined above and the Vision we have been operating from this year. It also allows for teaming to continue in a different form. It does change teaching responsibilities greatly.

## RJH Transition Structure Recommendation for 2016-17

### Recommended Model

- 6th grade    Math  
                  Science/Informational/Research  
                  Integrated World Studies (Social Studies/Literature/Informational)
- 7th grade    Math  
                  Science/Informational/Research  
                  Integrated American Studies I (Social Studies/Literature/Informational)
- 8th grade    Math  
                  Science/Informational/Research  
                  Integrated American Studies II (Social Studies/Literature/Informational)

Science and Social Studies would be responsible for the English Language Arts standards and competencies, splitting the informational and literature text between the two.

Library/Media will be co-teaching with all the core teachers to support research and informational text.

All standards and competencies are still being learned, the “how” of the learning will look different.

Unified Arts teachers will be assigned to teams for each trimester so that each Unified Arts teacher will be part of each grade level team over the course of the year. (art, music, family and consumer science, technology education)

Benefits	Challenges
Integration of Literacy Skills and Content as defined by NH's College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts.	Certification requirements HQT--??
maintains grade level teams	PD requirements for content literacy, co-teaching, and project based learning
scheduling--equality of time per class periods teams have more control over instructional time longer class periods	scheduling
foundation for project based learning	time and resources for planning and PD
more sessions of PE/Health for all students World Languages??	

meets the best practices of middle school education: integration of curriculum teaming--smaller teams are more effective	
teacher as facilitator and learning coach	
model looks the same at each grade level	
5th grade could integrate into this model very easily	
No anticipated staff reduction at this point	

Once a final decision is made, an implementation plan will be done to include communication to staff, parents, students and professional support for teachers for any of the structures.

### Resources for Integrated Studies

King Middle School, Portland, Maine

[http://king.portlandschools.org/about\\_us/our\\_school/adventures\\_in\\_learning](http://king.portlandschools.org/about_us/our_school/adventures_in_learning)

Expeditionary Learning

<http://eleducation.org/>

Edutopia

<http://www.edutopia.org/>

<http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-studies>

Boss, Suzie. "Integrated Studies: A Short History." *Edutopia*. Edutopia, 06 Dec. 2011. Web. 18 Feb. 2016.

Cruickshank, Douglas. "Kaleidoscopic Learning: An Overview of Integrated Studies." *Edutopia*. Edutopia, 07 Oct. 2008. Web. 25 Feb. 2016.

Team, Edutopia. "Why Should Schools Embrace Integrated Studies?: It Fosters a Way of Learning That Mimics Real Life." *Edutopia*. Edutopia, 06 Oct. 2008. Web. 18 Feb. 2016.

Vega, Vanessa. "Integrated Studies Research Review." *Edutopia*. Edutopia, 19 May 2013. Web. 18 Feb. 2016.

## **Professional Development Outline**

**March 18, 2016**--possible EdCamp session on project-based learning, RJH teams could have own session to begin discussion.

**May 12/13, 2016**--King Middle School Site Seminar--send at least one person for each team that did not attend in January.

**May 18, 2016 early release**--the content literacy standards of ELA, with specific examples from their current units--all teachers

**Summer Work--June 21, 22, 23 2016**--use UBD to plan integrated units

**Before School Days**--refine units, planning for scheduling

**2016-2017**--use staff meetings and common planning time

**Late Fall**--project based learning

**Other Models Considered:**

**Model A**

8th grade team      English Language Arts  
                                 Math  
                                 Science  
                                 Social Studies

6/7 grade team      English Language Arts  
                                 Science  
                                 Social Studies  
                                 Math--6th  
                                 Math--7th

Loss of Science position  
Hire for Social Studies position

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
maintain core subjects for each grade	one teacher--two curriculum levels
similar structure as now	slightly higher class size
	Limited grouping options
	gaps in schedule
	scheduling

## Model B

8th grade team      English Language Arts  
                                  Math  
                                  Science  
                                  Social Studies

6/7 grade team      English Language Arts  
                                  Science  
                                  Social Studies  
                                  Math

### Inquiry Based Position

- expert in inquiry project based learning
- act as coach to middle school teachers to incorporate inquiry project based learning into their subject areas.
- team teach with science and social studies teachers, 6-8, on inquiry projects in those subjects
- coordinate, plan, implement multi-age project learning on areas of interest to students to demonstrate the new competencies in our curriculum.
- assess and evaluate the impact on student learning of inquiry projects in all subject areas.
- teach 7th grade accelerated math class

### Loss of Science teacher

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
maintain core subjects for each grade	one teacher--two curriculum levels
inquiry position will allow students and teachers to being implementing inquiry/project based learning	slightly higher class size
	limited grouping options
	gaps in scheduling





Benefits	Challenges
maintain core subjects for each grade	one teacher--two curriculum levels
inquiry position will allow students and teachers to being implementing inquiry/project based learning	slightly higher class size
Keeps additional core classroom teacher	limited grouping options
	gaps in scheduling
	Teachers with too much planning time in their schedule
	Inability to completely integrate across all disciplines including UA's Not going to fulfill vision or qualities of middle school program

#### Resources:

"Blog." *Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements*. Ed. John Larmer. Buck Institute for Education, 21 Apr. 2015. Web. 25 Feb. 2016.

Cruz, Jenniver. "Leading with the 4 C's to Build the 5th C: Culture." Web log post. *Hangout with BIE: District Leadership and Project Based Learning*. Buick Institute of Education, 14 Jan. 2014. Web. Jan. 2016.

Larmer, John, and John R. Mergendoller. "Main Course Not Dessert (by BIE) | Project Based Learning | BIE." *Main Course Not Dessert (by BIE) | Project Based Learning | BIE*. Buck Institute for Education, 2011. Web. 25 Feb. 2016.

Shults, Debbie. "The 3r's, the Multi-age Classroom, Project Based Instruction, and Middle School." Web log post. *Debbie Shults Blog*. Blogspot.com, 11 Dec. 2007. Web. Jan. 2016.

United States. New York City Department of Education. Division of Teaching and Learning Office of Curriculum, Standards, and Academic Engagement. *Project-based Learning: Inspiring Middle School Students to Engage in Deep and Active Learning*. Ed. Santiago Taveras. New York: NYC Department of Education, 2009. Print.