



**Rye School District Administrator Updates**  
**Michelle Pitts. Principal, RES**  
**Anne Gilbert, Principal, RJH**  
**November 15, 2023**

**Goal 1:** *Maintain a culture that is positive, welcoming, and supportive to all stakeholders, including staff, families, students, and community stakeholders.*

**Rye Elementary School**

- We invited all members of the community for our Halloween assembly that included the Pumpkin Song by Kindergarten using American Sign Language, a fall poem, descriptions of Halloween celebrations from around the world and songs in Spanish taught by Mrs. Piper. Lastly, our staff band (Mr. Guth, Mrs. Piper, Mr. Ross and our student teacher, Mr. Valez) performed!
- Many students in grade 3 and 4 performed in "This One Time in Camelot." This is our second production and it is becoming easier to plan! The students really look forward to this event. We want to thank Jeffrey, Miles, Josh and Joan for bringing this to our students with such positivity and enthusiasm. Lastly, this year Kate Morrison worked with students to use a new tool, Flip Grid to record short videos reflecting the ways in which the production has changed and enhanced their lives at RES. These videos were shared with audience members through the program.
- The 400th committee fundraiser at the Atlantic Grill brought in over \$27,000 for the RES playground! We are beyond thankful for this effort and the dedication from the community to build this new playground.
- We recently held a Safety Meeting to debrief following an incident in the outdoor classroom involving a bee's nest. These debriefings occur with both fire and police, when needed following any incident involving emergency responders.
- Trunk or Treat was a PTA event that involved the RES community with several raffles, including my favorite, Principal of the Day, and others that help raise funds for teacher grants and other events that support our students. Thank you, PTA!
- We have started Principal Advisroy's Council meetings again and currently have both staff members and parents as members. This group comes together to brainstorm ways in which we can improve our everyday culture and sense of community by remaining focused on our RES and RJH goals set forth in this report.

### **Rye Junior High School**

- Our third annual Wedgewood Festival was held on October 20. The festival featured student designed games, which were run by 7th and 8th grade advisory students. Seventh and eighth grade students also participated in a chili cookoff, with 12 teams participating. Additionally, fifth and sixth grade students competed in a cornbread cookoff. Our celebrity judges selected winners in each category. Our community had a great time enjoying smores, cotton candy, and popcorn in a fun atmosphere.
- This year, in concert with our initiative to provide one trusted adult per student, student and staff surveys for wellness and academics are sent out weekly. These surveys provide valuable data, as well as narrative information that allows us to hone in on students and teachers needing support- as well as kudos for students who are thriving!
- Our student principal for the day, Penny, was a huge hit last week. Penny spent her day planning out an upcoming Spirit Week, using Canva to design infographics, completing classroom walkthroughs, and making necessary announcements.
- The first Team RJH meeting met Monday night. Updates provided at the meeting!
- As part of our new EXPLORE program, world language has taken a very different instructional shift for grades 5/6 and 7/8.
  - In grades 5/6, all classes focused on performing. With our artist in residence, Jeffrey Elwood, the Spanish and French classes created an original production to present. Spanish groups traveled to RES to present, and French students presented to families.
  - In grades 7/8, French and Spanish focused on learning language through cuisine. Students learned to cook a variety of dishes from different cultures, which culminated in a cafe lunch for invited staff, hosted by the students. They did an amazing job!

**Goal 2:** *Ensure students have equal access to a rigorous and personalized learning experience.*

### **Rye Elementary School**

- The staff at RES met to discuss the Step Up to Writing program, identifying successes and challenges thus far, as well as setting goals moving forward.
- Teachers engaged in parent conferences and were able to update families on student progress and areas of growth. These meetings further strengthen the bridge between home and school, an essential to building a solid support system for our students.
- Teachers have been learning how to administer Curriculum-Based Measures within the STAR assessment system, a progress monitoring tool. In addition, we have implemented CPT time this year, allowing for monthly meetings between the principal/math support specialist/reading support specialist and the teachers to discuss student goals and discuss content and pedagogy.
- Based on STAR data, we are beginning to consider and meet with students in need of additional enrichment in math or reading. This can occur in the classroom with the teacher or with a support specialist. In addition, Lexia Core5 allows us to identify

students who are not in need of this program but rather an alternative, such as book groups or literature circles, as an example.

### **Rye Junior High School**

- The math interventionist, Ashley Hass, attended RES's most recent Data Day, and was able to witness the structure and process of those meetings. At RJH, we will be reassessing students who receive interventions this week, and our first Data Day will be held next week. We are continually examining our practice and procedures around delivering support to students, both academically and otherwise. As a team, these rich conversations around the MTSS procedure at RJH continue to strengthen a shared vision and a collaborative school culture.
- Under Steve Zadavec's leadership, teachers and administrators from Portsmouth Middle School, Greenland Central School, and Rye Junior High School met for an entire day to discuss instruction in the eighth grade, and the transition to Portsmouth High School. At our first meeting, we focused on social studies and math.
  - The social studies meeting focused on instructional methodology. All middle school instruction is delivered thematically. All teachers involved in the discussion agreed there should be a common assessment for all eighth graders, and brought up using the US Citizenship Test.
  - During the math meeting, teachers discussed the programs used in each schools, along with supplemental materials used to bolster instruction. PMS is in the second year of offering an Algebra class for eighth graders, which GCS and RJH also want to start next year. Planning will continue this year, with the goal of offering Algebra to next year's eighth graders. There are many details to work out, but we are excited to move forward with this opportunity for our students.

<p><b>Goal 3:</b> <i>Prepare our students to be engaged citizens, understanding the impact they can make locally, nationally and globally.</i></p>
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### **Rye Elementary School**

- We recently recognized Bullying Prevention Month and held an assembly to teach all students common language that was then sent home to families. It is important that students understand that bullying is an act not a label. We were able to convey both the definitions, as well as the effects of bullying so we can continue to build a supportive and positive environment at RES.
- Amanda Goss and Leah Weeks recently designed and delivered staff professional development around Building Diverse Classroom Libraries. This was prompted by a grant funded by REF that gifted \$400 per classroom teacher to add books to their existing classroom libraries that reflected students' own identities as well as the cultures and diversity that exist in the world. Teachers were able to look through many books, as well as read short descriptions in order to make these book choices thoughtfully, while considering the needs of their current students and our community as a whole.

- Eileen Murphy will begin the Environmental Club in November. Students learn how to decrease their carbon footprint as well as work in the outdoor classroom; exploring, building, and creating. They also help to plan the 2024 Earth Day Celebration Assembly.
- We held our annual Veteran's Day assembly and honored the veterans within our school community. We want to thank Jacquie DeFreze and the student council for their hard work in preparing this each year. This year we welcomed Chief Petty Officer Britt Conway, a graduate from Portsmouth High School, who talked about her reasons for joining the armed forces and provided insight into her experiences in the Navy.

### **Rye Junior High School**

- Our Veterans Day assembly was held Wednesday, and featured the chorus and band members performing various patriotic songs to pay tribute to the men and women of the US Armed Forces. Thank you to Andrea Papoutsy and Duy Bui for preparing our students to perform, and to Amy Reynolds for organizing a community slideshow featuring student and staff family members who have served our country.
- Our year long French students recently traveled to Noble High School to see Le Flo Franco, a Francophone performer from Canada.. According to the students, the experience was 'lit', which is very high praise from discerning eighth graders. It's so exciting to see our students experience culture and language in such a creative way. They were also able to connect with students from other locations, and share the experience and appreciate other perspectives.
- Our seventh graders recently traveled to the Highland Center, which is a White Mountain Lodge on the AMC. Students did a lot of hiking, and received various nature based lessons and activities during the hikes. At the summit, we all had lunch and enjoyed the beauty of our home state. We also worked as groups to set goals, and participated in several problem solving games and activities. Our students were initially intimidated by the hiking experience, but all overcame their trepidation and were able to feel a sense of accomplishment.