



Rye School District Administrator Updates
Michelle Pitts. Principal, RES
Anne Gilbert, Principal, RJH
December 13, 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 continue to teach the Character Strong SEL program and have focused on various character traits such as respect, responsibility, gratitude and now empathy. Students are able to earn a certificate and a bracelet if they demonstrate the specific trait of the month. In addition, we still give Rye Riptide stickers to those who show any of the traits or demonstrate outstanding RES citizenship. Lastly, Lori Arsenault hosts an assembly each month to teach the new skill to the entire school community so everyone is hearing the same language.
- We want to thank the Rye PTA for providing a pizza party for our first graders who won based on their fundraising efforts!
- We worked with the Rye PD to conduct a lockdown drill. We debriefed with the Rye police and fire the same week to brainstorm ways to improve and the successes we experienced during the drill.
- On December 8, we hosted a celebration assembly titled, "The Gifts of Our Community." At this assembly, we honored a couple of groups in particular, the Rye PD for their collaboration and support (focusing on our work with Officer J9) and the Rye 400 Committee. The 400 Committee has been incredibly supportive of our school and our students and we wanted to show them our appreciation. Lastly, we honored Jacquie DeFreze (semi-finalist for Teacher of the Year in NH), Michelle Gwinn (nominee for Teacher of the Year) and Kate Morrison (Tech Educator of the Year).
- At our last staff meeting, I conducted a School Culture Survey, which was done anonymously and staff was able to share their thinking around a variety of culture components such as their ability to share ideas, social relationships and administrator support. We are analyzing this data and will discuss the results as a group.

Rye Junior High School

- December 4-8 is Spirit Week at RJH. Not only are we celebrating pride in our school and community, but we have been focused on giving back to our community through donations organized in conjunction with Rye Lions, Rye's Stocking Elves, and the RJH Student Council.

○ Here's an overview of our week:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Rye Pride (*Rye Pride Assembly)	Tacky Tourist	Dress like a teacher/student	Wear your favorite pro/college jersey	Class color ("Pep Rally assembly, Dance for grades 6-8)
Donate a book	Donate a food item	Donate a stuffie	Donate a personal hygiene item	Donate a game



- Along with the donations and fun dress up days, we also celebrated students who encompass core values of our school. Moving forward, these values will always be fit into the RYE acronym. For quarter 1, our values are: Respect, YES, Empathy

- Parents and community members were invited to our kick off assembly Monday morning. It was a great way to honor how fortunate we are to be part of the RJH community!

- Our Student Council members are volunteering to be part of the Stocking Elves event on Friday, December 8, and Saturday, December 9.

- Along with celebrating our students, we are also collectively showing gratitude for each other. In our conference room, each teacher has a gratitude sheet, where we write a descriptor of how we are grateful for each other. It has been so enlightening to read the responses of how we are each appreciative of each other's strengths and abilities.



- As part of our safety plan, the staff was offered CPR/First Aid training after school. More than 20 staff members completed the training. Thank you to Janet Smith, our school nurse, for organizing this event.
- We also held a student vision screening in conjunction with the Rye Lions, and were able to identify several students in need of more screening. Again, thank you to Janet Smith for organizing this event.
- Our first lockdown drill was conducted on Thursday. Thank you to Rye first responders and staff and students for their cooperation during this important drill.

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

Rye Elementary School

- Jen Sabine, Steve Zadavec and I were able to attend the National Blue Ribbon Celebration in Washington, DC. We were able to attend round table discussions to collaborate with teachers and administrators from all over the country. We learned about various interventions, such as Minds in Motion, that support individual student needs while also recognizing current research about the ways children learn. We were so proud of our school and hope we represented our community well!
- Hayley LaPoint, a meteorologist for WMUR9, came to teach our students about weather, clouds and her job in the studio. The content truly challenged the students' thinking and dispelled several myths about weather that prompted great class discussion and questions!
- We are still working on our Curriculum Alignment Map to ensure we have a solid draft of this work by the end of this school year and can make adjustments throughout the summer and present a final (but always fluid) document at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
- Leah Weeks and I are working together to plan upcoming writing professional development in January with consultants from Voyager Sopris to support our work with

Step Up to Writing. We are wanting to focus more on student voice and choice in writing and develop confident, creative and inquisitive writers.

- We are currently conducting progress monitoring meetings to discuss student progress as we fall between two data days and universal screening periods to ensure we are providing the right interventions for all students.

Rye Junior High School

- November 21 was the first RJH Data Day, using the RES format to discuss student data and make decisions about interventions provided to our students. Our team consisted of team teachers, the grade level case managers, guidance, nurse, math interventionist, learning coach, and administration.
 - Each student receiving intervention in reading or math was reassessed using STAR.
 - Data demonstrated that 70% of math students receiving intervention no longer require specialized instruction to address missing skills or content.
 - Reading data is too small to report on with validity.
 - “Round 2” intervention started on November 28, and is focusing on students who were less in need of intervention based on September STAR scores.
 - We are so excited to see the whole school reassessment scores in January!
- Greenland Central School and Rye Junior High administrators have been meeting to better align the middle school student experience in SAU 50. While we are discussing specific instructional goals together, the ability to meet and learn about programming at each school has provided numerous opportunities for collaboration.
- Wondering about some instructional highlights happening at RJH?
 - Social studies: In the 7/8 seminar Game of Life, students are learning about wages, taxes, and the affordability of housing, food, and necessities. To further complicate their budgets, students are now responsible for a new ‘family member’: their egg babies! Students need to provide care to the egg babies by ensuring that they are constantly monitored. During class, the basics of child care and the complexities of child rearing are factored into each student’s Game of Life.
 - ELA: Students are headed to the theater! Any time our students are able to attend a theater event, we take advantage of the opportunity. Students in fifth and sixth grade attended a special production of “Matilda” at the Portsmouth Music Hall, organized by fifth grade teacher Doris Gianforte. Eighth grade students will be attending “A Christmas Carol” at the North Shore Music Theater after reading the text in class. Seventh grade students will be attending a production in Concord based on five classic short stories, including “A Tell Tale Heart” and “The Necklace”, after reading each story in class. Watching a live performance of a familiar text is an effective way for students to further analyze the meaning and see aspects of the stories they may have not noticed.
 - Science: What better way to study force and motion than design and test your own balloon powered scooter? Our sixth grade students were able to collect data on their creations, and were very enthusiastic about the testing process!

Goal 3: *Prepare our students to be engaged citizens, understanding the impact they can make locally, nationally and globally.*

Rye Elementary School

- Students in grade 4 created ornaments for the Rye 400 to be hung on the night of the Rye tree lighting.
- Environmental Club students have been volunteering in the cafeteria as a support system for our custodian, supporting Kindergarten and Preschool students to sort their composting and trash. This help has been pivotal in ensuring a smooth transition between lunches but also allows our students to feel as though they are making a difference.
- At the end of the day, there is a block of time in which students in grade 4 can experience leadership opportunities. We have several students working in Kindergarten and first grade classrooms to help during math centers and across other content areas.
- We want to thank Molly Daniels and her family for the work they have done with the Stocking Elves project each year. Some of our students sew stockings, while others help to unpack boxes, while others fill the stockings with a myriad of gifts for children who would not otherwise receive a stocking. She helps to provide hundreds and hundreds of stockings to children in nearby communities and our RES children help with this effort.

Rye Junior High School

- For the first time, RJH students wrote and presented a PTA grant as part of their Genius Hour project. The eighth grade students are attempting to host a basketball “400 Fest” between RJH and Portsmouth Middle School. As part of the event, the students designed ‘city jerseys’, to be worn by basketball players that highlight what is special about Rye. For example, instead of Rye, the jersey will say Sandy Beach, as a nod to the original name for Rye at its founding. These jerseys will be used for years to come and are a wonderful way to commemorate the Rye400 events! We will continue to support our students as they lead the way in making a difference in our schools.
- Recently, one 7/8 social studies class walked the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail as part of their curriculum. The students were surprised to learn that enslaved people lived in Portsmouth. They also heard details about Ona Judge, a woman enslaved by Martha Washington who escaped and lived for years in Portsmouth and Greenland.