



## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT 50

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### **SAU 50 Director of Facilities - Administrator Report** **Brian C. Helfrich – Rye - January 2024**



### **Accomplishments and Successes**

- ★ Custom shelving and hooks to meet fire code safety compliance and organize our youngest students coats, pants, shoes and bags were completed by Jim Gordon. The positive change in regards to safety and organization to this wing of RES has been nothing short of amazing.



Commissioner Gordon  
strikes again 🙌

Spent his Saturday  
volunteering to build  
pants/coats hanging racks  
in the main wing of RES 🙌

- ★ HVAC maintenance is well under way. We have a great plan in place with Palmer and Sicard who knows our HVAC systems better than we do. You know the HVAC is running as intended when nobody knows it's even on. Over the next month you will see Palmer and Sicard here often performing all the intricate preventative maintenance to ensure years of efficient operation of our systems.



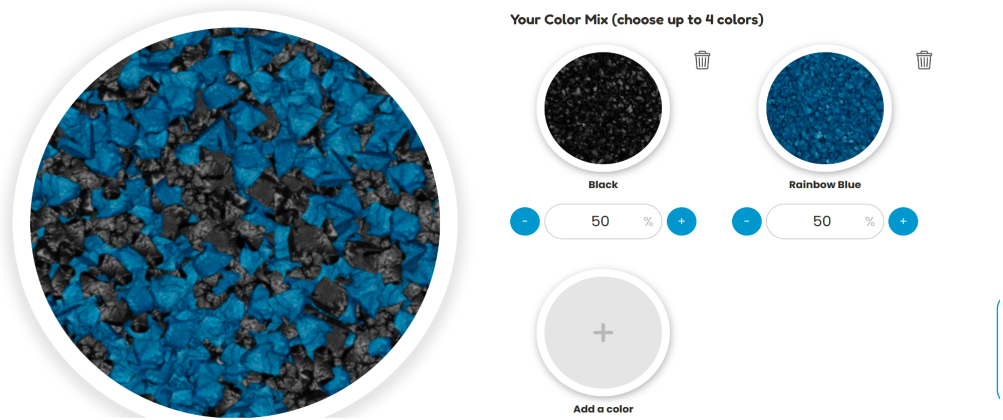
- ★ Basketball hoops that were 25+ years old at Rye Elementary School and pointed out by Primex as a concern were replaced. Rye Junior High will be done next year. These new hoops at Rye Elementary School are adjustable for our smaller students and have protective padding along the base as well as on the bottom of the backboard. The students, staff and Rye Recreation aftercare are beyond excited. Niko did some quality control testing after the install.



- ★ The Rye Elementary School playground is entering the final planning phase. We had our first playground committee meeting last week and I will be setting



up a question and answer Zoom call with Justin Mansfield (Miracle Playground Rep.) for early February. We are eager to lock in demolition, prep and install dates.



- ★ Lang Field has seen upgrades in its landscaping care, signage and in unplanned damage in the form of windstorm and falling trees on the dugout. We are working with Primex to file a claim to repair the dugout. NELC removed the trees on the dugout as it was a huge safety concern with kids playing in the field year-round.







- ★ NELC and Jim Gordon helped with numerous landscaping projects at RJH and RES the past few months. The new blue spruce tree is a hit at RJH, new doors on the storage sheds at RES, cutting up and removing of the old soccer goals, cleaning up the property lines and brush hogging and trimming tree limbs.



- ★ Winter is here and plowing season is at our collective doorsteps. You will notice plows and prep taking place for the winter season. We are in great shape at all the schools with quality companies/people who will be on top of snow removal and salting for all our needs. At some locations, we have various staff or town employees who also help in this monumental effort. While snow has yet to hit Seacoast NH, it is coming and the trend in recent years seems to be to start later and last later.





★ Drew and Jamie took over mid-year poly coating the RJH gym for the winter sports season. The RJH gym is getting used more and more each year and attention to the condition and maintenance of the floor is most important. Taking this load off Jim and I doing this is a big step so we free up time to focus on other projects each year. Great job Drew and Jamie!



### **Challenges/Future Budget Implications**

- ★ Winter arriving is what facility personnel refer to as “the dreaded heating season”. All the complex HVAC systems that make up our schools are put to the test each year around this time. Any areas lacking or malfunctioning are quickly identified and addressed to ensure proper operation for the remainder of the winter. This is why the HVAC maintenance lines in each year's budget are so critical. Just in the past month boiler #2 at RJH has experienced beginning of year issues with faulty valves and a broken water sight glass. Jim Gordon and Palmer & Sicard quickly addressed the issue short-term. We still have to replace the circulating pumps and housing which currently is very loud when operating. The library actuator and condensate line also need to be replaced. This is but 1 example of why having a quality dedicated HVAC company for each school is so critical. Palmer & Sicard knows our 2 school buildings as good as anyone. These are always challenges, but detrimental challenges if we do not properly budget for them.





- ★ Water testing is once again a central focus of mine for health and safety and to remain in compliance with the EPA. The Rye schools are in the middle of round 3 of lead testing with the **“GetTheLeadOut”** for NHDES (NH Department of Environmental Services). As always we want to be ahead of the curve and proactive. I am conducting water testing at the schools as of this report and awaiting results from the state to post to their website. [Our recent testing for Get the Lead Out Round 2 can be found here](#). After we are complete with this round of testing, I will be doing another round of PFAS/PFOS testing at all SAU 50 facilities through [Absolute Resources](#).
- ★ Over the holiday break our custodial crew at RES had a tight time-frame to transform 2 small office spaces into viable “reset rooms/time-out rooms”. This effort involved quite a bit of work over the break (thanks RES crew!) such as removing glass door panels, replacing with plexi-glass, removing 11 boxed electrical outlets, removing metal shelving and cabinets, removing basically anything with sharp edges, repainting the rooms, putting up wood corner walls to protect HVAC plumbing lines and other small safety details. The end result is fantastic. More work may be required in the future such as [safety padding](#) but this is a huge step in the right direction. Wish I had before pictures, but you will have to take my word for it.



- ★ Something that has been on many people's minds for years at RJH is the upstairs stairwell cubbies. We will be gathering quotes to reconfigure the privacy walls with clear plexiglass for improved student monitoring of these underutilized unique study spaces. This effort would involve removing the current counters, painting walls and adding collaborative furniture. REF is open to helping but some of this will have to come from the facility budget.

- ★ Tree care at both schools grounds will be a focus of mine over the coming years. In my short time here we have had several trees fall onto the property at both schools. Yearly tree limbing will make our grounds safer and decrease instances of trees falling on and damaging property. One area in particular is the ash trees around town have almost all been decimated by the emerald ash borer. I have had this issue at all the schools and can easily identify trees infected by this pest. Several trees around Lang Field must be removed this summer.



Dead ash trees in every town from the emerald ash borer, these will need to be removed in the next six months.







\*Rye Resident Stew Berman snapped this picture of a bus along the ocean.



*The Man, the Myth, the Legend... "Commissioner Gordon"*

