



Rye School District Administrator Updates
Michelle Pitts, Principal, RES
Anne Gilbert, Principal, RJH

March 20, 2024

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

Rye Elementary School

-Students in Kindergarten visited Webster at Rye for a weather rescheduled Valentine's event. Students performed "Try Everything" with all their song and dance moves and handed out handmade Valentines. Witnessing the smiles and incredible joy that this brought to the members of the Webster community was such a privilege. Thank you to the Kindergarten teachers who make these visits happen.

-Our safety team met with Homeland Security to discuss the planning of a future tabletop exercise as well as a full evacuation drill to occur next fall. We are coordinating our efforts with Homeland Security to ensure we have a solid safety plan so the discussions we are having in planning this drill have allowed us to tweak our protocols along the way.

-Our students in grades K-4 learned about body safety from Haven. This organization delivers difficult but important messages using puppetry and the engagement level of students was high. Families received information about the learning after the lessons to encourage the discussions to continue at home.

-We want to thank the PTA for a recent grant for a few student guitars. At the end of the day, our fourth graders have various options to connect with a passion, such as band or working with our younger students in Kindergarten or first grade. Caitlin Piper, a musician, started a small group of guitar players and being awarded this grant allows the students to play more often in school and not have to bring their prized guitars to school throughout the week. This group has become an anchor for some of our students to connect with their passion during the school day!

Rye Junior High School

-Our EDies visit was today! Thank you to the board members, parents, and administrators who visited RJH to talk about the learning programs available that benefit our students.

-The Tuesday, March 12 SAU PD day was held at RJH. Generally, RJH does not host events, as we do not have large spaces available for meetings. It was really wonderful to have so many people here in our building. We hope to host more often in the future!

-For Valentine's Day, we did a silly staff activity, in which staff identified their childhood celebrity "crush". It was fun, and we all had a laugh about the match ups. The REAL fun started when we displayed the results in the cafeteria. The students were pretty engaged with examining the display, and it created a fun way for students and staff to relate to one another (and some gentle teasing). We love the activities that bridge any perceived gaps between teachers and students!

-Upcoming dates to build community and culture in our school:

- March 25-29: Neurodiversity Awareness Week (organized with parent support)
- April 1: Recycled Percussion assembly, focus on kindness
- April 17: PAC Cultural Potluck with RJH community, 5:00-7:00

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

Rye Elementary School

-As mentioned in the last report, visitors from Portsmouth and Greenland attended our most recent Data Day. We have been collaborating ever since. Lauren Teeden, the assistant principal from Greenland, and I will be visiting Portsmouth in April to meet with the intervention team and discuss the MTSS process.

-We want to thank our students and staff in grade 4 for supporting the NAEP testing the day after February break. Students were assigned either a reading or math test and were tested in either the morning or afternoon. It was reported that our students worked very hard, were incredibly motivated and a pleasure to work with throughout the process.

Rye Junior High School

[-The math department has completed a strategic plan to introduce Introduction to Algebra and Algebra I as 8th grade math options.](#) This document contains all the details, including messaging to families.

-The 7th grade teaching team recently visited King Middle School in Portland, ME. KMS is a school that promotes project based learning, and works with other schools to help them develop systems for planning, funding, and carrying out a project based learning experience for their students. Our 7th grade team is planning a PBL unit for the end of the year, and felt their professional development time at King Middle was some of the most valuable learning experiences they have had as teachers. The team will be presenting their learning at the March 27 staff meeting.

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

Rye Elementary School

-Local author/historian J. Dennis Robinson and Scholastic/Highlights illustrator Robert Squier showed 3rd and 4th graders how they made the 32-page historic comic “Portsmouth Time Machine.” Their visit was generously funded by REF. Mr. Robinson’s and Mr. Squier’s dynamic, colorful comic shows the 400+ year history of this area unfolding as two protagonists, a boy and a girl, explore their shared heritage by going back in time via a cell phone glitch. Their adventures include Black history, First People's history, and women's history. The author and illustrator discussed editing, researching and collaborating to bring the project to fruition. For more info, check out <https://www.portsmouthtimemachine.com/> .

Rye Junior High School

-J. Dennis Robinson and Robert Squier also visited RJH to talk about the development of their graphic novel, “Portsmouth Time Machine”. Our students read the book in advisory groups, and enjoyed the story a great deal. However, their interest was truly piqued when the visitors spoke about how they generated the story, wove in local history, and used detailed images to help tell the story in a more complete manner.

-John Gianforte, the UNH Observatory director, visited RJH to talk about the upcoming solar eclipse on April 8. Students learned the details behind why eclipses occur, and learned new terminology that will help them better describe the experience when it happens. We were fortunate enough to secure eclipse glasses for all students at RJH, as the eclipse will be occurring during our dismissal time.

Last but not least...

Happening at both RES and RJH...

- Prismatic Magic came to RES to provide an awe-inspiring laser light show about black history. Students learned about music, famous black women in history as well as many important historical events that made a positive impact in our country. Students in grades 5 and 6 came to this presentation and it was amazing to share for RES and RJH to enjoy this together!
- We want to thank our students in grades 3-8 for their flexibility around state testing in writing, which is happening much earlier this year in an effort by the state to add a narrative option and hand score the assessment.

Rye Schools would like to thank...

- Another huge thank you to the Rye School Board for the continued delivery of Simpalo Snacks. They are a big hit on every delivery day! Our staff truly appreciates the support of the board- both in terms of provided snacks and otherwise.

- Our amazing bus drivers as Bus Driver Appreciation Day was in February. The work they do each day to get our students to school safely does not go unnoticed!
- Over the break, our custodial team took on many projects and even our visitors for NAEP testing noticed the sparkling floors! We are so appreciative of how they go above and beyond to maximize this time without students to ensure our buildings remain clean and safe.