



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

**June 12, 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**

- We hosted Kindergarten orientation for incoming families and were able to provide an overview of RES, as well as a full tour to showcase our unique programming.
- We hosted a presentation about Neurodiversity by Michelle Long through a PTA grant. We had an incredible turnout and family members in our community learned more about the unique and beautiful learning complexities of many of our students.
- Students in Kindergarten went on their third trip to Webster at Rye, bringing joy to the community and smiles to the residents' faces!
- Thank you to Jacquie DeFreze for another beautiful Memorial Day Assembly. The fourth graders did a great job and the band was truly impressive, thanks to Gene Guth.
- We recently held a safety meeting with Rye PD to discuss budget items we may need to consider, as well as tasks we need to complete prior to our October tabletop exercise, planning for a school-wide evacuation exercise.
- Field Day was a HUGE success! Holly Warden went above and beyond to invent activities and build props and structures to ensure a fun filled day with friends. We had a BBQ lunch as an RES family and watched an inflatable costume race starring some brave staff members. Every year this day is more impressive and this was no exception!
- Gene Guth led a music concert with grades K-2. Families were invited and the children were so proud of their singing abilities. We are so thankful that we have been able to bring these concerts back to RES and invite our families and community members in to see our talent.

**Rye Junior High School**

After many years, RJH was able to host a band and chorus concert with performers from every grade level. Our music teacher Mr. Bui was proud to demonstrate how hard our student musicians have been working over the past year to rebuild this vital music program. His

dedication is evident when the fifth and sixth grade band is made up of over twenty students! At the core of the music program is a small group of seventh grade students who remained motivated to learn music, even through the pandemic. Those students who helped us rebuild the music program were able to go see the Blue Man Group with a small group of parents and Mr. Bui.

Our nutrition staff wrote an REF grant to bring new food to our cafeteria. For two weeks, students were able to try different soups from Seacoast Soup, which was much appreciated! As a follow up, the staff then began preparing other soups after students became interested.

Ask me about the eighth grade mock deliberative session, which was held on Friday, June 7. Town officials assisted in the session to ensure the process was carried out with fidelity.

End of year trips:

8th grade: downtown Portsmouth, graduation beach day

7th grade: Renaissance Fair, Canobie Lake Park

6th grade: Pawtuckaway State Park

5th grade: Boston Freedom Trail, Wells Estuary, Bowl A Rama

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

### **Rye Elementary School**

-Caitlin Piper planned and facilitated a french assembly that belonged at the opening ceremonies of the Paris Olympics! Students in each grade participated with songs, poems, and games displaying their exceptional knowledge of french. We collaborated with PEMAC to bring awareness to our families about this music program that serves many of our students locally. Thank you, Caitlin, for showcasing your teaching skills through the talent and confidence of our students.

-The fourth grade teachers and students wowed us once again with their "Passion Projects." This annual project allows students to choose an individual passion and research it through various writing genres such as poetry, resume writing and journal writing. Families came to learn about everything from cheese to Broadway to Michigan.

-We are conducting Kindergarten screening and every year are adding more and more to our repertoire so we can learn as much as possible prior to the school year. We have added number recognition, fine motor and speech components. We also send home a family input survey to learn more from those who know our students best, their families.

-When considering the myriad of needs we have at RES, we want to ensure that we are meeting the social, emotional and behavioral needs of all students by maximizing our resources. Below is a link to our school enrollment for next year to give some context to where this additional support might be most utilized, specifically in grade 2. However, the need for these resources may shift as the year progresses.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1zgNjNGspOnwB6hFtleMMjcpHB4Q79dDh/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=100968883550370138451&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Below are some plans for the 2024-2025 school year but more suggestions are welcomed at our June 12 meeting to be summarized in communication to all grade 2 families, specifically, prior to the end of the school year.

- An additional classroom space for small group work
- Unified Arts teachers assigned to co-teach and support during certain blocks of the year
- Increased recess and lunch supervision, when needed
- Life skills and SEL program built for all students to support opportunities for reset and small group work completion in a separate space, as needed
- One registered behavior technician

These are resources that are either scarce or non-existent in many educational settings and we know how fortunate we are to be able to implement these interventions. Thank you to the central office and school board for their continued support.

### **Rye Junior High School**

Our world language students worked with two local artists to create copper garden sculptures based on French or Spanish culture. Students completed research on cultural differences based on their particular interests. They then worked with an artist to create symbols that represented their research. Finally, an artist working in copper helped them design, cut, and shape the metal to create the sculpture. Make sure you check them out as you leave the meeting tonight! This wonderful opportunity for our students was possible due to funding from a generous Clipper Grant that supported the artists in residence and the necessary materials.

Our first annual seventh grade Renaissance Faire was held on Thursday, June 6. Each group completed research on an aspect of the Renaissance, and were able to demonstrate their learning through cooking, demonstrations, artwork, and games. Students completed all the organizing as well, by mapping out the faire, ensuring that there was a balance of activities, and representing their learning in creative ways (like the Mona Lisa photo opportunity).

The fifth grade Live Wax Museum was held on June 4. Our students presented during the day to their teachers and other students, including the fourth grade students. The Live Wax Museum is a multi-faceted student task, requiring students to pick a person who has made an impact, use comprehension skills, research skills, presentation skills, writing skills, and speaking and presentation skills. Students crafted a short speech as if they were that person, and had to memorize the information. The knowledge and confidence displayed by each student clearly demonstrated the amount of work and care that went into this project.

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

### **Rye Elementary School**

-Recently we have taken many field trips, such as the Audubon trips (Grades 2 and 3), Star Island (Grade 4), Trolley Ride (3rd , Trip to Portsmouth Music Hall, Great Bay Discovery Center (Grade 1), SEE Science Center (Grade 2).

-We raised so much money for the NHSPCA Walk-a-thon (\$2,500 versus \$400 last year!). Thank you to the kindergarten and grade one students and families for supporting this incredible cause.

### **Rye Junior High School**

Our eighth grade students and six staff members returned from Montreal on Friday night. The students were amazing, the staff members were tired, but we all agreed that it was a wonderful trip. The students had a few guided tours around the city, visited some historical sites, and were able to walk around Old Montreal and the Underground City. They took a jet boat ride through some rapids, and ate and danced at a traditional sugar shack. The last two hours of our bus ride home was a chorus of nostalgic songs. While our students are excited for the next chapter of their lives, they are fully realizing that their time in Rye schools is coming to an end.

Many of our Genius Hour projects are coming to fruition at the end of the year. There has been a smoothie sale to help raise funds to replace a Nicaraguan school roof, with the student writing an REF grant to buy the smoothie ingredients. Two students organized a presentation for our rising fifth graders, and visited RES to talk with the students. Other students organized a kick ball tournament/bake sale to raise money for XXX

An incredibly popular Explore class, the Food Truck Expo, culminated in a student run food truck exposition, in which ‘investors’ could taste the food, hear about the food truck concept of each group, see a food truck design, and ask questions about the groups’ profit margins, location strategy, and intended audience. Before the end project, the class was able to interview some food truck owners and research successful food truck designs. The variety of ideas, and food, was incredibly impressive. Tacos, fried chicken, cupcakes, pasta, chocolate covered fruit, and even a food truck designed to address most food allergies were created by students.

### ***Last but not least...***

#### **Happening at both RES and RJH...**

- Moving On/Graduation Celebrations! We are so proud of our fourth and eighth graders for their incredible contributions to our RES and RJH communities. We know how lucky we are to have had you walk our halls and are going to be incredibly proud of the contributions you will make as you enter this new stage in your lives. THANK YOU for everything!
  - RES Fourth Grade Moving On Ceremony: Wednesday, June 12 at 9:00 AM
  - RJH Awards Ceremony: Tuesday, June 11 at 9:00 am
  - RJH Eighth Grade Graduation: Tuesday, June 11 at 5:30 pm

- Portsmouth High School senior clap out was Friday morning. Our students love seeing the graduates, the staff loves to see our former 'kids', and the graduates are excited to be back and reminisce on their years in Rye Schools.

**Rye Schools would like to thank...**

- EVERYONE for such a wonderful year, for supporting our schools, our students and our staff!
- Lilah Heaney and Addi Rapsynski for using their Genius Hour genius to teach our fourth graders about RJH!
- The Playground Committee, the School Board and the entire Rye community for helping us to build a NEW PLAYGROUND at RES!!!!