



**Rye School District Administrator Goals**  
**Michelle Pitts, Principal, RES**  
**Anne Gilbert, Principal, RJH**  
**October 23, 2024**

AS A PERSON, I AM:

- Kind- I show empathy, compassion, and consideration for others.
- Confident- I strive to be independent, self-assured, and prepared to achieve goals.
- Creative- I use my imagination to express myself and share original ideas.
- Mindful - I build healthy habits for my personal well being.

**Rye Elementary School**

- We had an amazing digital citizenship assembly with guest stars, Chris Russo, Chris Cooney and Kate Morrison, the staff behind the digital curtain, sharing how we can see the footprints our students take online and ensuring they make the right choices along the way! We talked about the ways in which we take care of our devices because they belong to our school. The team did an amazing job engaging the audience and ensuring they understood the importance of using technology responsibly.
- Most recently, we held an SEL assembly focusing on our two character traits from Purposeful People for September and October, respect and responsibility. We focused on green words and red words for our new K students, teaching them to decipher between them and make good choices. We also taught responsibility in regards to remembering belongings (ex” outdoor day) and riding a bike to school, as we modeled our new protocols following our collaboration with Rye PD and several parents.
- Chris Van Dusen visited our school and expanded our students’ imagination beyond our expectations. He spoke of his, “If I Built a \_\_\_\_\_” series, all based on the expansive imagination of a young boy. He told us all about ways one can write a fiction story from fact and how he uses catalogs and other everyday items as inspiration. We were so excited to meet him and he didn’t disappoint his eager fans!



- Haven came to speak to students in grades K-4 about personal body safety. We always appreciate their support in teaching these vital lessons.
- Michelle Pitts led a training for room parents in order to ensure that our events/parties align with our focus on healthy habits and our Wellness Policy/Plan. Thank you to all the parents who attended!

### **Rye Junior High School**

- Our students have had a variety of opportunities to build personal character through events at school. Completing these intensive experiences builds a team atmosphere and sets a positive tone for the entire school year.

- Sixth grade: All sixth graders and their teachers attended Merrowvista for three days and two nights. All in attendance agreed that it was an amazing experience, and students were able to build relationships with others that they may not have had previous to the trip. The Merrowvista staff told our teachers that they wished every group was as successful as the Rye students!



- Seventh grade: All seventh graders and their teachers spent two days at UNH's Browne Center, where they worked on setting personal and group goals through teamwork challenges.

- Our tech director, Chris Cooney, is organizing a wallpaper contest for all students. Our district sends out the same wallpaper to each student's device, which they don't especially love. To make it more interactive and fun, Chris came up with a quarterly Wallpaper contest, where students can submit designs, and then vote on their favorites. Stay tuned for Quarter 2 results!

#### AS A CITIZEN, I AM:

- Respectful- I behave courteously and am thoughtful of the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions of others.
- Engaged- I participate in my community and explore what makes it unique, while keeping a global perspective.
- Responsible- I hold myself accountable and take action when appropriate.
- Collaborative- I listen and communicate effectively and work well with others.

### **Rye Elementary School**

- RES welcomed the Akwaaba Ensemble from Ghana. We learned so much about the culture of Ghana and we thank Julia Barrett for immersing the students in the art of Ghana prior to their visit. The group loved the artwork and were also impressed that Amanda Goss had taught her students Twi, the language spoken mostly in the



southern regions. This event had children and staff singing, dancing and celebrating a region and culture unlike their own, but we all came together as one during this incredible experience.

- Our second graders have earned two Fun Fridays in a row. This is a time when students are learning math but doing it outside with partners and enjoying the fresh air and the resources of a hot top/drawing landscape that they can use to measure and then hop/jump to learn about standard measurement. The children worked so well in pairs and were able to teach one another seamlessly. These second graders also visited the Seacoast Science Center recently to learn about erosion right in their own community!



- We have started our Environmental Club, which is on a waiting list and led by Eileen Murphy, and Student Council, led by Jacquie DeFreze. The EC will take over all of the recycling duties and the Student Council is collecting underwear and socks for victims of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

### **Rye Junior High School**

- Year four of the RJH Wedgewood Festival was a huge success. We raised nearly \$5000 for our students' end of eighth grade trip. More importantly, our school community worked together to achieve a common goal. Students were running games and provided tours of Wedgewood. Teams of students made chili for the chili contest, and made cornbread. Teachers volunteered and made food, and our family community turned out to help out in a variety of ways. Everyone had a great time, and many people told me it was the best one yet!



- The Explore Genius Hour and Library Volunteer projects are all creative and demonstrate engagement and the capacity for building community. A few from Quarter 1 have made a lasting impact on our school, and we applaud our students' persistence in getting things done!
  - The Scholastic Book Fair returned to RJH after many years. Students organized the event, advertised to students and families, set up the fair, managed it throughout the week, and broke it down to send it back. They learned a ton about organization, time management, and remaining calm!



- The Phase II of the Library redesign was created by students. The small group of students met with the Hertz furniture representative to determine the purpose of the top floor of the library. They then selected furniture that fit the theme of the library and created a budget to submit as part of the Library budget. Next, they worked with our office staff to generate two other quotes for similar furniture for budgetary purposes.
  - A group of four students met with Brian Helfrich and Jim Gordon to discuss and plan out a process for updating and maintaining the Lang baseball field. In particular, they are looking to upgrade the fencing and dugouts. Together, they set goals, determined what can get done this year, and planned out how to see the project through to completion.
  - Bake sales/lemonade sales/refresher sales are always popular. All the sales' proceeds go to a worthy cause, either outside our building or to benefit our students directly.
  - A badminton tournament during recess has generated a fever pitch of excitement at RJH. There is a March Madness-esque bracket, and the winners will be battling it out on Friday. All students are invited to watch, and the gym is packed each recess. Stay tuned for more updates on the upcoming basketball 3 v. 3 tournament happening in early November.
- Social Studies session 2 begins on Monday, October 21. An overview for each grade:
    - Grade 5: [Kid Governor Civics Program](#): our 5th grade teachers attended several training sessions to provide quality civic education to our students in this important election season.
    - Grade 6: National and state branches of government
    - Grade 7/8:
      - Aloha! Welcome to Hawaii! (indigenous peoples history, civics)
      - Never Shall I Forget (required Holocaust instruction for grade 8)
      - The Game of Life (civics, economics)
      - The Vietnam War and the US Fight Against Communism (history, civics, geography)
      - US Constitution and the Bill of Rights (required civics instruction)
      - Voices of Change: Womens' Suffrage (history, civics)
      - What History Books Don't Tell You (history, civics, economics)
      - WWII: Tension to Turmoil (history, geography)

**AS A LEARNER, I AM:**

- Resourceful- I use tools, materials, and critical thinking skills to address issues and to solve problems.
- Persistent- I keep trying and approach learning with resilience, motivation, and flexibility.
- Prepared- I take on academic challenges and equip myself to succeed in a variety of settings.
- Curious- I explore learning opportunities with wonder and reflection.

**Rye Elementary School**

- Students in grades K-4 have been persevering through several assessments, such as STAR and a writing prompt using a universal rubric from Step Up to Writing. The STAR Early Literacy and Reading assessment determined which students might be at risk for dyslexia. According to New Hampshire RSA 200:59, we are mandated to communicate at-risk scores to families. Last week, prior to the November 30 deadline, we sent letters home, along with permission slips for targeted intervention and a reading support plan, following teacher communication. Although not mandated, we also sent permission slips and a math support plan for those students who qualified. This work was aligned with the plan in all SAU 50 towns and has been a collaborative project since last spring. We are so proud of our alignment, benefitting the students of SAU 50.
- Students in kindergarten enjoyed a recent lesson in outdoor education in which they collected natural resources to write their name after reading, Your Name is a Song by JamilahThompkins-Bigelow and illustrated by Luisa Uribe.
- Kate Morrison and Michelle Pitts presented a professional development opportunity for staff sharing the many learning opportunities that exist with technology. Kate shared the resources of Google, Canva and Seesaw to share work but also provide teacher-to-teacher and student-to-student feedback. She also shared the work of educators who are teaching students to wirelessly project their work during lessons to become teachers themselves. There was also information shared about the importance of limiting technology to production versus consumption, as much as possible to increase interactions between students and minimize potential health risks.
- Kelsey Crowell and Gina Henshaw led a PD on the Early Release day, sharing many tools and strategies to support students' executive functioning skills, including regulation, organization, time management, flexibility and more. In addition, Gina shared the new process and details around speech intervention through MTSS. Teachers were so appreciative of this information and we were grateful to have this precious and rare opportunity for learning as a team, paras included.



### **Rye Junior High School**

- A team from RJH attended a social studies meeting with teachers from Greenland Central School, Portsmouth Middle School, and Portsmouth High School. PHS teachers felt that the RJH students would benefit from instruction around geography and mapping skills. As a team, they also identified some necessary work habits that all middle school students could benefit from:
  - Works Cited
  - Research skills
  - Informational writing
  - Reading varied texts

Our social studies team will be working on how to incorporate these skills, and others identified by RJH, into instruction this year and next. Other important content skills we are planning to work on include two Founding Documents classes, Government classes,

and 'Dinner Party History', which will provide a brief overview of historical events from the 20th and 21st century.

- The RJH ELA teachers had their first work session with Cynthia Merrill, a reading and writing consultant and former UNH professor. The feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive, and Cynthia was enthusiastic about our teachers' professionalism and dedication. The focus of each session was to connect reading to writing, and how to have meaningful discussions about the content of each. Our 7/8 team decided to work on a two year theme of 'identity', and tie that theme into book studies and writing assignments. The grade 5/6 team worked on using mentor texts to teach successful writing techniques. Cynthia will be working with teachers for three sessions at RJH this fall.
- Students at RJH are receiving intervention services for math, reading, and writing as part of our MTSS process. Star scores were distributed, families were contacted and gave permission for the interventions to occur, and our math and literacy interventionists are working with small groups and working in classrooms. Intervention may be filling in gaps in learning in order to be successful in the regular classroom, or it may be extensions of student learning for students who need more of a challenge. As part of the MTSS process, our MTSS team meets every other week to discuss student plans and progress, and look at internal data generated from teacher and student check in forms that are completed each month.

### ***Other Updates***

#### **Rye Elementary School and Rye Junior High School**

Students completed their first lockdown drill. All students received a safety overview in the weeks before the lockdown, along with teacher explanations of what happens in each classroom during a drill.

Each building has never looked better, from the organized classrooms to the landscaping!

Thank you to our facilities team for creating a clean, healthy environment for our students to learn.