RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
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To be approved by the Rye School Board at the September 23, 2026, meeting.

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Annual Summer School Board Retreat of the Rye School Board was held in person on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 10:00am. at the Rye Junior High School in the cafeteria.

PRESENT

School Board Members: Matt Curtin (Chairperson)
Katherine Errecart
Michelle Wheeler
Laura Belden (Absent)
Claire Spollen

SAU 50 Central Office Staff: Stephen Zadravec, Superintendent of Schools
David Hobbs, Assistant Superintendent
Susan Penny, Business Administrator
Brian Helfrich, Director of Facilities
Chris Russo, Director of Technology (Absent)
Stacey Kirby, Director of Special Education
Rebecca Dwyer, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

School Administrators: Anne Gilbert, Principal, Rye Junior High School
Michelle Pitts, Principal, Rye Elementary School

Visitors: There were no visitors present this morning.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Curtin called the meeting to order at 10:07am. and indicated that today's annual retreat would begin with the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS / PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Curtin asked if there were any visitors present that would like to make a public comment. Hearing none he closed public comment.

FINANCIALS

Approval of Manifests

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated June 26, 2026 in the amount of $1,401,336.56 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated June 28, 2026 in the amount of $1,726,460.39 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated June 29, 2026 in the amount of $162,798.56 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated June 30, 2026 in the amount of $19,672.38 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated July 13, 2026 in the amount of $579,871.00 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to approve the manifest dated June 24, 2026 in the amount of $376,091.89 Discussion. Vote: 3-0

Financial Report
Ms. Penny reported that the District is in the process of closing out the fiscal year and anticipates returning more than half a million dollars in unexpended funds. She also noted that an updated grant summary has been uploaded to the shared drive for the Board's review.

Budget Transfers

- Other

Budgetary Oversight and Management Discussion
The Board discussed discretionary spending and long-term financial planning, including opportunities to improve purchasing practices, explore bulk purchasing, establish longer-term schedules, and identify operational efficiencies. Members noted that spending patterns have remained generally consistent, with increased activity in August and September and additional expenditures throughout the school year, including unexpected needs and facility repairs.

The Board emphasized the importance of transparency and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources, particularly in light of potential economic and legislative changes. Discussion included reviewing grant activity, furniture replacement schedules, operational efficiencies, and staffing needs as vacancies occur.

The Board also discussed developing a phased approach to classroom furniture replacement by investing in higher-quality furnishings, establishing predictable replacement cycles, and avoiding large-scale purchases in a single budget year. Members emphasized clear communication with staff regarding spending expectations while recognizing that unforeseen student and facility needs cannot always be anticipated during the budget process.

The Board agreed that continued long-term planning, prioritization of capital projects, and careful management of discretionary spending will support responsible financial management and maintain community trust.

House Bill: HB1300
Ms. Penny provided a legislative update on House Bills 1610, 1300, and 564 and their potential financial impacts on the District.

House Bill 1610 was vetoed, allowing districts to continue retaining year-end fund balances under existing law. For Rye, the District may retain up to five percent of the current year's assessment, or $882,729.30 for FY26. The Board previously voted to retain $550,000, with approximately $535,000 expected to be returned at the close of the fiscal year.

House Bill 1300 was signed into law on July 15 and will place a local school tax cap question on the November ballot. If approved by a 60% majority, the measure would take effect with the FY28 budget and limit annual growth in the local school tax levy, while limiting SAU central office expenditures to six percent of total school district appropriations. The Board discussed the potential impact on future budgets, collective bargaining, tuition, contracts, and long-term financial planning, as well as the importance of educating the community about the legislation.

House Bill 564, effective August 18, requires each SAU 50 member community to include a separate SAU budget warrant article beginning with the next budget cycle. Approval will be based on the aggregate vote of all four communities. Beginning at the end of FY27, unassigned SAU general funds will be apportioned and returned to member districts using the existing allocation methodology.

SUMMER RETREAT
Briefings: Principal & Directors

PRINCIPALS
Ms. Gilbert and Ms. Pitts discussed several curriculum updates for the upcoming school year. It was noted that the implementation of a new mathematics program will represent a significant instructional change and is expected to provide greater continuity in mathematics instruction across grade levels. The discussion also highlighted ongoing work to align core social studies instruction with New Hampshire State Standards. Additionally, Ms. Pitts and Ms. Gilbert recognized the benefits of continued curriculum collaboration across the SAU, noting that the joint planning efforts have helped better prepare students for the transition to middle school by providing greater alignment and consistency in instructional expectations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION
Ms. Kirby provided an update on the audit that is scheduled to take place during the first week of August. She reported that Rye did not meet the State's expectations in its Local Educational Agency (LEA) determination. Ms. Kirby explained that the audit process includes a review of high school outcomes, transition outcomes, state assessment results, the District's performance across the 14 federal indicators, and the expenditure of grant funds, all of which contribute to the District's overall determination. She also shared that she is developing an updated procedures manual and expressed that she feels well prepared for the upcoming school year.

FACILITIES
Mr. Helfrich provided an update on the District's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), noting that a copy has been uploaded to the shared drive for the Board's review. The Board discussed the possibility of holding a posted meeting to review the Capital Improvement Plan in greater detail, including a presentation from the Turner Group. Members also recognized the outstanding work of the District's custodial staff and expressed appreciation for their continued efforts in maintaining the school facilities throughout the year. Additional discussion included

the District's custodial services, the condition of the Rye Elementary School parking lots, and the need to begin planning for anticipated facilities projects in the Fiscal Year 2028 budget by including placeholder appropriations for future capital improvements.

The Board also reviewed several facility priorities, including the replacement of aging air purification units, unbudgeted kitchen exhaust repairs, and the importance of evaluating community cooling space capacity and availability. Members discussed prioritizing generator replacements due to their importance for emergency preparedness and community use and reviewed the history and intended purpose of the District's maintenance trust fund. The Board also discussed the ongoing goal of budgeting approximately $25,000 annually for future playground improvements. Mr. Helfrich noted that an updated Capital Improvement Plan reflecting Fiscal Year 2028 priorities will be presented to the Board in September.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Hobbs provided an update on this year's Administrative Retreats, with the primary focus on advancing the District's strategic plan. Each school has been implementing its individual plan while maintaining its unique identity and needs. The administrative team will continue working with district leaders and principals to refine these plans into clear, actionable priorities and establish a baseline for measuring progress.

The retreat will include a review of each school's strategic plan and next steps, with continued focus on MTSS, differentiated instruction, real-world application of learning, practical life skills, and literacy. Data will continue to be reviewed in collaboration with SAU 52. Although the current strategic plan extends through 2029, Mr. Hobbs emphasized the importance of reviewing and refining it annually to ensure it remains responsive to the District's needs.

The Board also discussed incorporating technology, facilities, and financial planning into the strategic priorities while keeping student growth at the center. The Frontline platform will be used to connect professional goals with strategic objectives. Each district will bring a proposed plan to the Administrative Retreat, with clearly defined goals, measurable outcomes, and action steps to support accountability, continuous improvement, and future budget planning.

The Board also discussed school identity, professional development priorities, Opening Day on August 26, and the shared professional development day on September 8, including grade-level collaboration and the phased implementation of differentiated instructional practices.

TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Russo was not present at this years' annual retreat.

SUPERINTENDENT

Leadership Visions and Policy Committee Restructuring

Ms. Kaschuluk led the Board in a discussion regarding leadership priorities and the restructuring of the Policy Committee. The conversation focused on reviewing the committee's structure and procedures to strengthen the policy development and review process. The Board discussed involving the building principals and a Board representative in future policy reviews to encourage collaboration and ensure policies remain aligned with District practices and procedures. Members also emphasized the importance of maintaining consistency between Board policies and administrative procedures and reviewed guiding principles for future policy

work.

Future Training Opportunities
The Board discussed the possibility of partnering with the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) to provide specialized, Board-specific training opportunities. Discussion included developing a targeted menu of training topics based on Board interests and needs, with input gathered through a Google Form. Potential topics included budget committee roles and responsibilities, recent legislation enacted in Concord, emerging trends from the New Hampshire Department of Education, and special education.

Agenda Planning
Ms. Kaschuluk introduced a new Board agenda template designed to improve the agenda development process and support more effective meeting planning. The Board discussed implementing the new format beginning in September. Additional discussion focused on several governance initiatives for the upcoming school year, including the potential addition of student representatives and the possibility of incorporating student updates into the principals' reports. Members also discussed establishing School Board goals, identifying policy priorities, and strengthening collaboration with District directors and the administrative leadership team.

PRELIMINARY ACTIONS/ SECRETARY'S REPORT

- Approval of Public Minutes: June 24, 2026

On a motion by Ms. Spollen, seconded by Ms. Errecart, the Board voted to approve the Public Minutes dated June 24, 2026. Discussion. Vote: 3-0

- Approval of Non Public Minutes of June 24, 2026
    - The Board agreed to postpone the vote of the Non Public Minutes until September's board meeting

POLICY
JFAB: Admission of Non-Resident Pupils
The Board discussed potential revisions to the current Policy JFAB regarding out-of-town domicile. Discussion focused on clarifying the qualifying standards for resident student status, including the documentation necessary to demonstrate an intent to return to a primary residence within the District and the circumstances under which students may continue attending District schools without paying non-resident tuition. Members also reviewed considerations related to determining a student's legal domicile in accordance with applicable state law and discussed examples of temporary residency situations, such as families residing outside the District while constructing a new home within the District. The Board agreed that the Policy Committee will continue reviewing Policy JFAB and consider revisions to improve clarity and ensure the policy reflects current legal requirements and District practices.

Reaffirmation

- **DFA: Investment**

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Wheeler, the Board voted to reaffirm policy, DFA as recommended by the Policy Committee. Discussion. Vote: 4-0.

OTHER

The Board discussed opportunities to strengthen communication and community engagement, including developing a communication plan for elementary school families to promote School Board member recruitment. Members also discussed the possibility of having a School Board information table at the school's Open House, similar to the Parent Teacher Association's presence, and reviewed considerations regarding the appropriateness of such an initiative. Additional discussion included incorporating Board-related communications into regular Board business and enhancing committee reports as a means of keeping the community informed of ongoing initiatives and Board activities.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to go into Non Public Session. Discussion. Vote: 4-0.

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Wheeler, the Board voted to seal the Non Public Minutes. Discussion. Vote: 4-0.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to accept the resignation of Ms. Hounan with regret. The Board authorized Ms. Kaschuluk and Ms. Kirby to work with Birch Tree on her transition into her new role. Vote: 4-0.

FUTURE PLANNING

- Wednesday, September 23, 2026 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, September 30, 2026 6:00 PM at Newington Public School (**SAU 50 Jt. Board**)
- Wednesday, October 21, 2026 5:30 PMat Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, October 28, 2026 6:00 PM at Rye Junior High School (**SAU 50 Jt. Board**)
- Wednesday, November 18, 2026 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, December 16, 2026 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School (**The second week**)
- Wednesday, January 13, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School (**The second week**)
- Wednesday, February 17, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, March 17, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, March 24, 2027 6:00 PM at Greenland Central School (**SAU 50 Jt. Board**)
- Wednesday, April 21, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, May 19, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School
- Wednesday, May 26, 2027 6:00 PM at Maude H. Trefethen (**SAU 50 Jt. Board**)
- Wednesday, June 16, 2027 5:30 PM at Rye Junior High School (**The second week**)

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Errecart, seconded by Ms. Spollen, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:00pm. Discussion. Vote: 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rebecca Dwyer
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
August 5, 2026

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School Board Secretary Date