

Approved by the Rye School Board at its May 21, 2008 meeting.

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The monthly meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held at the Rye Junior High School on April 16, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Ian Grant, Betty Anderson, Peggy Balboni,
Michael Schwartz, Jeanne Moynahan.

Administrators: Dr. George A. Cushing, Superintendent
Chris Pollet, Principal, Rye Junior High
Patricia-Lane Richardson, Principal, Rye Elementary

Staff Kathleen Cole, Kathie Kennedy, Katie Jarvis, Sheila Adams, Ron
Fortier, Mary Coombs, Jeanne Brown, Maggie Hanna, Sally
Welch.

Residents/Visitors: Kristen Kassas, Robin Husslage, Marty Random, Joe Cummins,
several RJH students.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Pollet introduced students from RJH who were in attendance to give a presentation on a unit they had just completed called "The Greatest Generation". Mr. Pollet explained that this unit represented the type of middle school interdisciplinary work they should be working on for this grade level. Mr. Fortier explained some of the requirements of the project such as reading books, creating timelines, posters and taking swing dance lessons. The unit also incorporated the 16 Habits of Mind. The culmination of the unit was "USO Night", an evening open to the public with musical performances, swing dancing and museum.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Mr. Schwartz proposed, and Mrs. Moynahan seconded, a motion to approve the School Board public minutes of March 19, 2008, as revised. Vote: Unanimously approved.

REPORTS:

Superintendent:

Communications:

- Dr. Cushing received a letter from Tom Mosier, requesting his daughter be allowed to finish out the school year at RJH, as they are moving out of town. Dr. Cushing stated that this request is within our policy, and that both he and Mr. Pollet recommend that we allow her to finish the year. Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to allow Tom Mosier's daughter to finish the 2007/2008 school year at RJH. Vote: Unanimously approved.
- Dr. Cushing presented a letter from Ron Fortier in regards to the purchasing of team and gender specific athletic uniforms. Mr. Fortier's letter recommends that we not purchase gender/team specific uniforms and that students should purchase items that are not re-usable

such as, socks, hats and shorts. Mr. Grant stated that the Board had approved funds for the purchase of uniforms to make things easier for Mr. Fortier, but if that was not the case, then this issue should go back to the committee with Mr. Fortier's recommendations. Ms. Anderson reminded the Board that this topic had come up at a special issues meeting over a year and a half ago, and in November of 2006, the Board voted to fund the purchase of uniforms, including socks and hats. She stated that the larger issue addressed at that time, and subsequently with regard to field trips, is about not "nickel and diming" parents for costs associated with school sponsored programs. Mr. Schwartz stated that we should leave the decision up to the athletic committee. Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan to allow the athletic committee to decide on this issue. Vote: Unanimously approved.

- Dr. Cushing extended an invitation to attend a presentation by the NH Department of Education at Plymouth State College on 5/6/2008 from 10:30 to 2:00. RES teacher, Jacquie DeFreze has been nominated and is a finalist for NH Teacher of the award.
- Legislative Updates: Senate Bill #539: policy recommendations have been made on this funding bill with a House vote scheduled next Wednesday to be followed by further review in the Finance Committee. This bill affects donor towns. There will be a speaker at New Castle on April 23, 2008 in reference to this bill and in Rye on April 29, 2008. CACR 34, which is sponsored by Governor Lynch, would allow educational funding decisions to be made by the legislature and also affects donor towns. The State School Board Association does not support this bill. Dr. Cushing advises voting against House Bill #1330 and Senate Bill #374. This Senate and House Bill change the nonrenewal process by removing current language making School Board review of nonrenewals the exclusive remedy for an appeal. House Bill #1645 is regarding retirement and would bring down the cost to towns.
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for PHS were passed put. Dr. Cushing said there needs to be a community approach to working on improving these results, and we should form a committee to look into what we can do. Dr. Cushing stated the state-wide survey results can be found on the State's website and that normally individual school results are issued as a press release. He further stated that at the Portsmouth School Board meeting, a motion was made to have SAU 52 and SAU 50 meet for a retreat to specifically talk about this survey. Dr. Cushing will keep the Board updated.

Elementary School

- Ms. Richardson reported she will be meeting tomorrow with staff members to discuss piloting a new Math program.
- World Language Proposal surveys results are in with 43 of 115 distributed being returned. 30% would like to keep the program as it is, 27% favor 3rd graders taking Spanish for half the year and French for the other half, the way it is currently done in the first and second grades, and 43% other opinions including beginning one language as early as kindergarten and grade one. Ms. Richardson and staff will look into best practices in other schools. For the 2008-2009 school year she recommended keeping the program as it is. Mr. Grant suggested that Peer School Committee and parents be involved up front in the process to get wider support.
- After a discussion with Mr. Pollet, Ms. Richardson requesting to change work percentages for Bonnie Vadala to work .8 (4 days a week) at RES and .2 (1 day a week) at RJH. Mr. Pollet stated that he would like to have Ms. Vadala focus on the 6th grade transition. Mr. Grant asked what her current percentage at each school is. Ms. Richardson replied .7 at RES and .3 at RJH.
- Kathleen Cole reported on NEASC. As part of the reaccreditation process, they looked at the School Board Goals and the Rye District Goals to create a Mission Statement and

Expectations for RES. They would like the Board to review and approve the adoption of this mission statement. Ms. Anderson suggested the wording in this mission statement should include “Follow The Child” language in line with the District’s Follow the Child Philosophy. Dr. Cushing agreed. Ms. Anderson remarked on what a good job the NEASC Accreditation Committee had done, and suggested they add the words physical, personal and social to their statement. Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to accept the statement with the addition of the aforementioned wording. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Junior High

- Mr. Pollet commented on the earlier presentation of RJH’s USO Night. He thought it was important for the Board to see the work that went into this project.
- Mr. Pollet reported on Rachel’s Challenge and how students at RJH are forming groups called “Friends of Rachel” They will be working on integrating the 5 challenges into the school and the community. The goal for next year is to build time into the schedule for the group to meet once a week.
- The new school name to replace Rye Rebels was voted on last week. The choices were: Rye Riptides, Rye Patriots and Rye Stingrays. Votes were Riptides = 87, Patriots = 25. Stingrays = 45. There were 33 votes for other names including some votes for the previous name of Rye Rebels. Ms. Anderson suggested asking the Student Council if they might have another vote between the winning new name and the old name, Rye Rebels, as the latter was not listed on the “ballot” as a choice in the first election. The Board agreed that the name change was fine, and left it up to the student council and Mr. Pollet to make the final decision. They will next hold a logo contest to design the new logo.
- Ms. Balboni asked if information has gone out to parents about the Rachel’s Challenge groups. Mr. Pollet said he will send the information out via e-mail. Mr. Grant asked if there were 3 phases to Rachel’s Challenge. Mr. Pollet replied that there are different programs you can bring back and implement in your school. He would like to hold the Rachel’s Challenge presentation every 2 years at RJH. Ms. Richardson stated that several RES teachers attended the Rachel’s Challenge presentation and are starting a “random acts of kindness” program. Dr. Cushing stated there are 70 students at PHS in the Friends of Rachel group.
- Mr. Pollet thanked Mr. Southworth for helping RJH with the CAT testing in Mrs. Costanzo’s absence. Mr. Pollet thinks we need to look at tutoring opportunities and use online programs to help better prepare our students for testing. Ms. Anderson asked what the numbers for students going to private school next year are. Mr. Pollet replied at this point there are approximately 20 students out of 56 planning on attending private schools, with 5 going to Philips Exeter Academy.
- Mrs. Moynahan reported that she attended USO Night which she thought was wonderful and how great she thought it was that they had invited local veterans to attend. She further stated how phenomenal the Rachel’s Challenge presentation at PHS was. The RJH performance of Grease is this week and she hopes all will attend.

Financial

Manifest –

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve the manifest of March 14, 2008 through March 28, 2008 in the amount of \$373,463.24. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the manifest of March 29, 2008 through April 9, 2008 in the amount of \$272,020.85. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Budgetary Consideration-

Mr. Grant stated that, after speaking with Mr. Katkin, they will not be able to complete the renovation work at RES before 6/30/2008, so they will push some of that cost to next year's budget. In addition, money designated for a snow blower at RJH is no longer needed as a snow blower has been donated. Mr. Pollet has requested new photocopiers for RJH, and they will need another softball coach for this year. The last motion was for \$60,000 and the new amount is \$63,374.00. Ms. Richardson spoke with Mr. Katkin about the renovations at RES and the cost for the cabinets can be paid for this year but not the labor. Mr. Schwartz stated that the estimate for the survey of the track and safety road is approximately \$15,000. It was agreed by the Board that RJH could use the extra money to purchase one new photocopier and use approximately \$4000 towards the purchase of a second photocopier with the balance to be paid for with money budgeted for that line item for 2008/2009. Due to the new information from Ms. Richardson on the labor, Mr. Grant and Mr. Katkin will re-review the exact costs and Mr. Grant will report back at the next meeting. He sees that there may not be a need to go beyond the \$60,000 approved.

RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS:

- Jeanne Brown said that World Language week will be celebrated the week of April 21st.
- Joe Cummins asked what the percentage of male teachers in Rye was. Mr. Grant replied that there are 2 at RES and 4 at RJH. Mr. Cummins asked what studies have been done on this and the effect. Mr. Grant replied that what it comes down to is hiring the best qualified person for the job.
- Sheila Adams said that on Earth Day RJH will be part of a live 24 hour web cast. RJH will be on from 9:00 to 10:00a.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action – April: Completed: Payment of School District Moderator, Payment of School District Clerk, New School Board Member Orientation, Superintendent Evaluation, Re-election of Professional Staff, and Checking Signs Regarding Weapon Free School Zone

Calendars – 2008/2009 and 2009/2010: Dr. Cushing has revised the calendars for the next two school years. He stated that the day in November we used to give the teachers as credit for fall parent-teacher conferences is not needed as it adds one more day to the end of the year for students and teachers. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the calendars. Vote: Unanimously approved.

It was discussed and agreed by the Board to move the date of the June School Board Meeting to June 11th at 6:00 p.m., so as not to conflict with RJH graduation.

Rye Rec: Ms. Anderson said she has met with Ms. Richardson, Lee Arthur and the Commissioners about moving the location of the after school program room at RES. Ms. Anderson stated it has been worked out and that the program will be moving to the 1st grade wing. She further stated that Ms. Richardson has been very accommodating and that she believes a reasonable compromise has been reached that will be good for both the aftercare program and for the school's needs. She also thanked Lee Arthur for her flexibility and willingness to work out a mutually agreeable solution. Mr. Grant thanked Ms. Anderson for all of her hard work with the committee to make this work.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

- Ms. Balboni proposed eliminating the Athletic Committee at this time. She is confident in the direction the athletics program is going under the RJH principal's leadership. She continued that the athletic director would continue to work on identified areas of improvement but she feels the committee was formed for a transitional period and has served its purpose. She stated that if it needs to be revisited at a later date they will and she will continue to assist the program and keep the Board updated of any issues. The Board agreed.

- Committee Assignments: The committee assignments for the 2008/2009 school year are as follows:
- Ms. Balboni stated she would like to eliminate the Athletic Committee at this time. She is confident in the direction it is going and with the RJH principal's direction of the athletics program. She continued that the committee would not abandon what they are working on but feels the committee was formed for a transitional period and has served its purpose. She stated that if it needs to be revisited at a later date they will. The Board agreed.
- Committee Assignments: The committee assignments for the 2008/2009 school year are as follows:

School Board Officers:

Chairperson - Ian Grant
 Vice-Chairperson – Michael Schwartz
 Secretary – Peggy Balboni

Standing Committees:

Annual Report – Michael Schwartz and Betty Anderson
 AREA – Peggy Balboni with Betty Anderson as backup
 Budget Committee – Jeanne Moynahan
 Building Use – Ian Grant
 Bus Committee – Ian Grant
 Communications – Michael Schwartz and Betty Anderson
 Curriculum (Portsmouth) – Peggy Balboni with Betty Anderson as backup
 Emergency Management – Jeanne Moynahan
 Finances – Ian Grant
 Health Insurance – Jeanne Moynahan
 NEASC – Jeanne Moynahan and Peggy Balboni
 NHSBA – Jeanne Moynahan
 Peer Schools – Ian Grant and Michael Schwartz
 Physical Plant – Ian Grant
 Policy – Jeanne Moynahan
 PTA – Jeanne Moynahan with Betty Anderson as backup
 Public Relations – Michael Schwartz and Betty Anderson
 RESPA and ACT – Betty Anderson and Ian Grant
 REF – Michael Schwartz
 Rye Recreation – Betty Anderson
 Secondary School Advisory – Peggy Balboni with Betty Anderson as backup
 Special Issues – Betty Anderson and Jeanne Moynahan
 Technology – Michael Schwartz

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to accept these assignments for the 2008/2009 school year. Vote: Unanimously approved.

- Physical Plant: Mr. Grant reported that work installing vinyl on the gym wall at RES will start over April vacation. Bids are currently being accepted for waterproofing the exterior gym wall at RJH and for handicap access. The hot water heater has been installed at RJH.
- Special Issues: Ms. Richardson attended this meeting. Topics discussed were the RES holiday concert, the 8th grade class trip, world language, athletics and Rachel's Challenge. Ms. Anderson commented what a positive forum this meeting is and would like to suggest that the PAC groups run the meetings in the future, rather than a Board member with School Board members in attendance to answer questions and participate in the discussion. Mrs. Moynahan agreed with Ms. Anderson. Ms. Anderson stated that the timing of the holiday concert (not having it in December) is likely to continue to be a source of concern for some

people and suggested that, as part of the decision-making process for the timing of next year's concert, Ms. Richardson might want to get clearer information about the numbers of parents who prefer the concert in December vs. January.

- REF: Nothing to report.
- PHS: Secondary School Advisory Council met on 4/15. They discussed the number of early release days at PHS. Last year they had 8 and they have reduced that number to 6 for next year. Rye continues to advocate strongly against early release days at PHS. PHS reports that they do not lose any instructional time due to early release days, and that they are using the ½ days to focus on assessments. Jeff Collins spoke about opening up the communication lines by meeting with the middle school principals. They feel very positive about the honors program and have really reached out to parents and students in order to make the process go more smoothly. PHS is also working on improving the transitional program from 8th to 9th grade. Next year they have budgeted for a full time business teacher and a full time math teacher. They are committed to filling these new positions. In addition they are adding a required economics course (1/4 course) and are looking to expand their entrepreneurial program with the new business teacher. Dr. Cushing asked if SAU 50 should write a letter to the Portsmouth City Council in support of the PHS budget. Ms. Anderson asked if we sign a letter in support of the budget, does it put us at a disadvantage if Rye has issues that are not addressed in the budget? Mr. Schwartz said we should identify any shortcomings. Mr. Grant stated we should write a letter stating what we agree and disagree with including what we would like to see added. Mr. Grant will draft a letter and share with the Board.
- PTA: Mr. Pollet reported that Mary Coombs is looking to have the PTA fund an author to speak at RJH. He stated that he and Robin Husslage have put together a supply list by grade level. It is planned to have school "packets" of supplies available for parents to purchase to save them the trouble of hunting the required supplies independently. They also discussed sponsorship of the track, and Run Pedal, Paddle which is scheduled for May 17th.
- Rye Rec: Nothing further to report.
- Communications: Mr. Schwartz passed around a draft summary of communication strategies. Ms. Anderson asked how often the PAC meetings were held. She commented that the meetings seem to have had a positive impact on the Board's goal to gain input from parents and teachers, and that she would like a report on what is working and where we could improve, so that they it can be discussed at the Board retreat in July.
- Technology: Mr. Schwartz reported that they are consolidating the plan to work for both schools.
- Curriculum: Nothing further to report.
- NEASC: Nothing further to report.
- Peer Schools: Mr. Grant suggested we look at peer schools for information on their foreign language programs
- Athletics: Nothing further to report.
- Bus Committee: Mr. Grant reported they have sent a draft of their recommendations to the bus company and should hear back from them in the next month.
- Policies: KF - Community Use of School Facilities, for adoption: This policy was discussed and modified. Ms Anderson asked Dr. Cushing to revise #18 and resubmit. All Board members agreed to use the first paragraph from the 2001 policy. The Board will revisit this policy after revisions.

GBCDA – Background Investigation for Volunteers and Temporary Contracted Service Providers, for adoption: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to adopt this policy. Vote: Unanimously approved.

EBC – Crisis Management/Response Plan, for adoption: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to adopt this policy. Vote: Unanimously approved.

EB – Safety Management Plan, for adoption: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to adopt this policy. Vote: Unanimously approved.

IMAH – Health Education/Daily Physical Activity, for adoption: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to adopt this policy. Vote: Unanimously approved.

JJE – School Sponsored Activity Fundraising, 2nd reading: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to accept this 2nd reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

JICD – Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process, 1st reading: Ms. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to accept this 1st reading as modified, to combine with JLDBA, and change the heading to Behavior Management. Vote: Unanimously approved.

JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities, 1st reading: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to accept this as 1st reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

JICFA – Hazing, 1st reading: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to accept this as a first reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson suggested we combine this policy with the policy for bullying.

IHAH – World Language Program, 1st reading: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to accept this as a first reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

IICA – Field Trips and Excursions, 1st reading: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to accept this first reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Motor Vehicle Seat Belt Use Policy, 1st reading: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to accept this first reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Slips, Trips and Falls Prevention, 1st reading: Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to accept this first reading as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved.

- Ms. Anderson asked to put a discussion of Rye’s process for policies on the agenda for the next meeting. She would like to discuss a different process for policies that would include working with the SAU as we have been, but add special Rye meetings, possibly quarterly, to focus on policies Rye cares about but the SAU Policy Committee does not.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mass e-mails from the schools were discussed. It was agreed that the schools need to be more diligent about clearly marking e-mails as “Not School Sponsored” that contain information that is not school sponsored. In addition e-mails should be clear in the subject line as to what it pertains to and who it is from, including a “Not School Sponsored” reference in the subject line.
- Ms. Anderson received an e-mail from a parent concerning the Carbon Challenge. The issues raised were: (1) how much teacher and student time is being devoted to this program and how does that detract from other school programs, (2) using students to promote a program through a competition where success depended not upon their own efforts, but upon their parents or others participating, (3) the political nature of the issue (if the name were “saving energy” rather than “Carbon Challenge” it would be less political as whether or not carbon and global warming has become a political issue), and (4) how much access we allow outside programs, even town programs into our schools, including using our e-mail distribution lists. The Board agreed that there should be on-going discussion about these issues.
- Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the public minutes of April 2, 2008. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr.

Schwartz a motion to approve and seal the non-public minutes of April 2, 2008. Vote:
Unanimously approved.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to go into non-public session at 9:50 p.m. for purposes of superintendent review discussions. Unanimously approved on a role call vote.

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Board returned to public session at 10:15 p.m.

ADJOURN: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. Vote:
Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary