

*Approved by the Rye School Board at its October 15, 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 September 17, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

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

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

Staff: Kathleen Cole, Tom Southworth, Jeanne Brown, Katie Jarvis,  
Maureen Paul, Phoebe Guarnaccia, Maggie Hanna, Laura Bond,  
Sheila Adams, Timothy Moynahan, Michelle Wirth, Sally Welch,

Residents/Visitors: Jane Wade, Shawn Crapo, Joe Cummins, Lee Arthur, Victoria  
Loring, Michael Lawton, Gina Aspinwall, Kathy MacAlpine,  
Robin Husslage, RJH student.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Schwartz called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. He thanked the new staff members in attendance for joining the Rye School District.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan and seconded by Ms. Balboni, the public minutes of August 5, 2008 were accepted. Vote: Unanimously approved.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Dr. Cushing reported that the New Hampshire School Board Association has updated their school approval ratings as part of the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval. "Approved with Distinction" is no longer an offered rating. In the past this was only used for schools with a kindergarten program, but currently the ratings are under discussion at the state level and "Approved with Distinction" may not be offered in the future. Thus, the Rye School District received the current top rating.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Ms. Anderson reported that she attended the Rye Recreation Commission meeting last Monday with Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet. Lee Arthur, Director of the Rye Rec program, stated that, at this time, there

are up to 53 students on some days of the week in the program. The dedicated room they are currently using at RES, is designated to allow no more than 40 individuals per order of the Rye fire department. They also use 2 adjoining teachers' rooms due to the number of students in the program. She feels the Rye School Board needs to look at this issue now as they have at least 10 more students on the waiting list for this program. Ms. Anderson stated that, year to year, they need to address space issues and she feels the Board should be pro-active for next year to determine if the after care program can be accommodated at RES. Ms. Arthur reported that there is not adequate space in the community and she feels that the residents do not always understand the schools role in this area. She further commented that she is fully appreciative of how the school has accommodated the program. Ms. Anderson stated that 2 music teachers currently share a room as well as 2 foreign language teachers in order to accommodate the after care program. She said that having the program at the school is the best possible scenario but expressed concern regarding financial responsibility for creating extra space. Ms. Anderson suggested that this may be an issue the community needs to vote on. Ms. Balboni asked how the program is using the 2 adjoining rooms. Ms. Arthur responded they use the other rooms but the students' choices become limited as well as the program. Ms. Balboni asked if using other rooms would make a difference and was this a staffing issue. Ms. Arthur replied that, at present, they have 5-6 staff members in the program at a 1 to 8 ratio which is good. Mr. Schwartz asked if they have had to turn people away from the program. Ms. Arthur replied they have. Mr. Schwartz stated that the program works well and he personally thinks it is a wonderful program. Ms. Moynahan stated that, in the past, the program was run by the YMCA and the students were bussed to the church. She stated that she understands wanting to keep it at the school, but if there is not space for the program, has Rye Rec looked at using the former police station. Ms. Arthur replied that they were denied space at the church a few years ago, but perhaps they should inquire again. She further commented that the town was not interested in letting anyone use the former police station at this time. Ms. Moynahan inquired if there was space available at the Rec Center. Ms. Arthur replied that it is a possibility with expansion but it would still limit the numbers. Mr. Schwartz stated he thinks that we should form a committee to look at this issue. Dr. Cushing commented that if we can keep the program at the school it would be best but we need to find the space. He further raised the possibility of installing 2 modular units behind the school. Ms. Arthur said that the Rec department has a master plan coming out with an independent survey of Rec activities and space. Sean Crapo a parent with a child in the program commented that he feels we need a community center in our town not only for children but for seniors. He stated that we have a growing number of seniors in our community that could also benefit. He feels that moving back to the Rec center would be a step back. Ms. Anderson stated that she feels we need to discuss this issue further with Mr. Katkin and Dr. Cushing and bring it back to the next Board meeting. She volunteered to serve on the Committee with Ms. Richardson, Ms. Arthur and Mr. Katkin.

## **REPORTS:**

### **Superintendent:**

Communications - Dr. Cushing reported that Mrs. Lyons apologized that she was unable to attend this Board meeting but will be at the October board meeting to discuss goals.

Dr. Cushing discussed the need for a pre-school aide position that was not budgeted for as the issue occurred after the budget was set. A preschool student attending the program needs a 1:1 aide. The student attends 5 days per week for 3 hours per day. Alison O'Malley has been hired to fill the position. The position is for a total of 15.5 hours per week. (3 hours per day/4 days per week and 3.5 hours per day/1 day per week). Last year a student attending the program 3 days per week also needed a 1:1 aide. The position was added during the 07-08 school year, although the position was not budgeted and was added after the budget was prepared for this school year. The student is continuing in the program and continues to need the services. Alison O'Malley filled the position last year but she has been replaced by

Janice Pitts. (3 hours per day/2 days per week, and 3.5 hours per day/1 day per week) Ms. Anderson added that a parent had contacted her about the Community School playground and suggested that issue be put on the SAU 50 Board meeting agenda. Dr. Cushing replied that it is already on the agenda and that it can be discussed further at that meeting. Mrs. Moynahan asked if we still had money in the SPED fund, perhaps we could use that money to pay for the position.

- Dr. Cushing was appreciative of the school board members in attendance at opening day. Dr. Cushing passed around a model for SAU 50's goal to show how it works.
- Mr. Southworth discussed high school exit data. He reported that 83% of Rye students, including students at private school, were going on to a 4 year college. Mr. Schwartz asked how this number related to previous years. Mr. Southworth replied that the percentage was always in the low 80s, which is high for the state. Ms. Anderson asked what percentage of those students attended PHS. Mr. Southworth replied approximately 76%. The report showed a variety of college choices and some 2 year community colleges. Ms. Anderson commented that it would be helpful to Rye parents when making a decision for high school and to the Board in assessing PHS performance, to have the figures separated and list the college choices for PHS seniors separately in order to assess how PHS students are doing. Dr. Cushing agreed but said we should continue to report them as combined as well. Mr. Schwartz asked if we were holding the parent to parent night again this year. Mr. Southworth said we will be holding it in October, and that it is primarily for parents to hear and ask questions of current PHS parents. Mr. Schwartz asked if we should discuss colleges at this meeting. Mr. Southworth replied that the high school already does this. Mr. Southworth next reported on SAT scores. He stated that we continue to see strength in math with scores of 590 and higher. All students got 400 or higher including our special needs students. Ms. Balboni asked what scores would be reported if the student took the SAT's more than once. Mr. Southworth replied that they would use the most recent scores or if it was close he would use the higher score. He further stated that most of the time the scores were basically the same. Mr. Southworth passed out the PHS AP honors numbers list (number of students in PHS honors classes). He stated that in 9<sup>th</sup> grade more females were taking honors classes. Ms. Anderson asked if we knew what the numbers were in other schools. Mr. Southworth replied that we do not have access to that information. Dr. Cushing stated we could check with the secondary advisory committee to see if we could obtain some of this data. Mr. Schwartz stated that one of the School Board's action items was to track trends, so this would fit with that item. Mr. Southworth gave a summary of grants available and reported that the NECAP science results would be available soon.

### **Elementary School**

- Ms. Richardson reported that the custodians worked very hard this summer to get the school ready for opening day.
- Ms. Richardson stated that this year they have a school wide theme of respect at the school in relation to the Rachel's Challenge program. She said Maggie Hanna comes up with a different specific theme for the school each week.
- RES is busy with their NEASC reports, and that Kathy Tucker, who has taken a leadership position at this task is doing a wonderful job.
- Enrollment numbers are at what they had estimated.
- Ms. Richardson is working with Mr. Katkin on bus issues.
- The PTA has funded several great programs at RES.
- Curriculum night will be held September 18, 2008.

## **Rye Junior High**

- RJH held a professional development initiative on August 20<sup>th</sup> with a one to one laptop presentation, professional development speaker Cheryl Oakes and technology training in the afternoon.
- Mr. Pollet reported that each staff member has 3 goals, technology goal, team goal and an assessment goal.
- NEASC reports are in their final stages, and will be presented to staff in November. Mr. Pollet will be visiting Timberlane Middle School as they are in the final process of NEASC and he will be looking at what they have done.
- Ms. Ellwood will be going to Antarctica in less than a month. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be conducting a school wide project as the current 7<sup>th</sup> grade was in 2nd grade on Ms. Ellwood's first trip to Antarctica.
- Friday e-mails are working well.
- Mr. Pollet presented a letter received by Kerry Ridolfi from Elie Weisel, author of "Night" regarding a project the students completed last spring.
- Mr. Pollet gave all teachers a PLC overview. This is a level of professional behavior all teachers should aspire to.
- Michelle Wirth gave a presentation on "America Sings". Ms. Wirth would like to take the RJH chorus members to Washington DC for community service and to participate in this event in April with more than 4,000 students from across the country. Mr. Schwartz asked if they were looking to the Board for funding. Mr. Pollet stated that we could use some of the money budgeted for field trips and that we also may have to fundraise for this trip. We will need to see what the cost is and assess if he were to ask the board for assistance. The Board agreed that this trip sounded like a good experience for the students. Ms. Anderson further stated that she thinks the program has merit but is concerned that all parents need to be informed about this opportunity and that all students be able to join the chorus, even at this date in the school year. Mr. Pollet stated that students will be allowed to join the chorus if they are interested. Ms. Balboni asked if this would create a scheduling issue. Mr. Pollet replied it would not. Mrs. Moynahan thinks that sometimes children are more comfortable when they are singing as group. Ms. Balboni thought this trip should be brought up at the parent advisory meeting in October and go out in the Friday e-mail.

## **Financial**

Manifest: Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni to approve the manifest of August 1, 2008 through August 25, 2008 in the amount of \$215,119.64. Vote: Unanimously approved. Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni to approve the manifest of August 26, 2008 through September 10, 2008 in the amount of \$360,165.55 Vote: Unanimously approved.

## **RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS:**

- Robin Husslage commented on the postage spent for mailings from PHS and RJH. She thought RJH may be able to get a less expensive bulk rate through the post office. She also commented on the worn or non-existent basketball hoops at both schools. Mr. Pollet stated the problem is there are no eye loops and that the net is easily ripped off and needs constant replacement. He stated we are looking at replacing the entire backboard system. Ms. Husslage also commented on a foreign language issue for students who would be taking Spanish in high school after taking French at RJH. Ms. Husslage asked about opportunities for each grade level to work together specifically 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> so that the students have an opportunity to get to know each other so the younger students wouldn't be intimidated by the older ones. Mr. Pollet replied he would look in

to this and that he had several ideas.

- Maggie Hanna asked what RJH was doing with Rachel's Challenge this year and stated she would like to help and be involved with RJH. Mr. Pollet replied he is meeting with teachers later this week and that is one of the topics to be discussed.
- Kathleen Cole stated that her 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class will be working with Ms. Ellwood during her Antarctica expedition. She also reported that the contest for drawing the cover art for the recycling center is coming up.

#### **Financial (cont):**

Dr. Cushing reported that Mr. Katkin is looking for Board approval in obtaining procurement cards for RES and RJH to give the administration more flexibility when purchasing items for the school. The Board agreed to go ahead with this process with the understanding that Mr. Katkin would brief the principals. Ms. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approved the use of purchase cards with the above-stated understanding. Vote: Unanimously approved.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont):**

Calendar of Policy Action – September - all completed.

- Notification of Students and Employees of Tobacco Products Ban
- Payment of School District Treasurer
- Student Handbook Distributed to all Students
- Financial Reports Audited by Independent CPA
- Handling of First Aid and Emergency Care Procedures Reviewed with Staff
- Students instructed on Proper Procedure to Board and Exit School Bus
- Provision on Staff orientation
- Notification to Students and Employees of Policy on Pupil Safety and Violence
- Notification to Students and Employees of Policy on Dangerous Weapons
- Review of Student Accident Report Policy with Staff
- Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA
- Posting of signs Regarding Weapon Free School Zone

Goals – Dr. Cushing reported we have implemented the Learning compact and the schools have sent out the Parent input form. We are currently on track for October. Mr. Schwartz reported that he met with the PTA, REF Board and Rye School Board to discuss the funding process. Ms. Balboni stated that this process needs to go further in that the 3 groups need to meet all together to discuss who will fund what.

#### **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**Physical Plant** – RES/RJH: Mr. Pollet reported that the new carpet at the front and gym entrances has been installed. A neighbor to RJH has recently cleared some tree branches from their yard to help with the sight line at the schools exit. He also stated that RJH is currently exploring, with funding from REF the expansion of the library. The drawings are in the library for anyone to view. Mr. Pollet continued that the library is at its capacity and that we are looking to maximize the space. This expansion would allow the library to be used by another group of students when there is already a class in the library. Mrs. Moynahan reported that the historical society would only be concerned with changing the façade. Mr. Schwartz stated that REF has put them in contact with a builder for a rough estimate. At this point the cost estimate for construction plans to be drawn up is approximately \$4,200.00. He asked if the Board wanted to wait for the rough estimate of building or move forward with the construction plans.

Ms. Anderson made a motion to move forward with the construction plans at a cost not to exceed \$5,000.00, seconded by Ms. Moynahan. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing reported that the Health Officer and Mosquito Commission have both recommended spraying one more time before the first frost. The Board agreed.

**Special Issues/Parent Advisory:** Ms. Richardson reported that she and Mr. Pollet will hold the first meeting together in October.

**REF:** Mr. Schwartz stated grants are due November 1<sup>st</sup>. He thanked REF for their work and funding of the conceptual design of the library

**PHS:**

- Ms. Balboni reported that the SSAC committee met on September 16<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the PHS class size at present is 281 juniors to 247 seniors, and that they have 15 new staff members.
- PHS has completed the states' requirements for NEASC and all course competencies. They will now work on their assessments and the teachers will use the early release days for this purpose.
- Principal Collins reported that NECAP results will be released in the first 3 weeks of October and Science results in May.
- The school continues their work with the Friends of Rachel Group, which is student led.
- PHS will present the musical Peter Pan this fall.
- There are 130 participants in fall athletics.
- PHS Chairperson reported that the Board has hired the NH School Board Association to search for a new superintendant and will include the Rye district in their search. They will be posting this job for the next 3 to 4 months.
- PHS is hiring a new SPED Director.

**PTA:** Mrs. Moynahan reported the first meeting was held September 16<sup>th</sup>. The PTA has funded several projects; \$2,200.00 for weaving at RES, \$1,300.00 for the production of Annie, \$263.00 for world language, \$590 for an Isles of Shoals trip and \$760.00 to a former RJH student who, for his Eagle Scout project, wants to refurbish the reading garden at RES. They are presently searching for a new PTA president and vice president. Membership is currently at 125 members. The next meeting will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in October.

**Rye Rec:** Nothing further to report.

**Technology:** Mr. Moynahan reported that they have divided up the committee into 2 tech teams which will feed into the larger tech committee. They are putting together a tech plan to complete by June. Mr. Schwartz commented on the one to one laptop initiative. He stated that approximately 120 teachers came in to work with an expert on how to increase technology on their time off. Mr. Pollet stated Ms. Adams has been giving her own tutorials. He stated that the next step is to look at the cost. Mr. Schwartz stated that the mobile laptop carts are used every day, all day. He stated that the main component is could we fund a tech integrator to work with the teachers.

**Curriculum:** Ms. Balboni reported this committee will meet on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

**NEASC:** Nothing further to report.

**Peer Schools:** Nothing to report.

**Bus Committee:** The SAU Bus committee met in regards to the new contract. Mr. Katkin gave them the option to work with First Student only or go out to bid. The committee asked Mr. Katkin to go out to bid with at least 3 bidders. The committee is putting together additional aspects for consideration; Rye's ability to request a late start, and seat belts for field trips. Mrs. Moynahan spoke to several police agencies in the state a few years ago and their findings are that it is actually more dangerous to wear a seat belt on a bus. Mrs. Moynahan also found that seat belts have to be installed in new buses and cannot be retro-fitted into older buses. Mr. Grant would like the Board to give their thoughts on adding 1 bus for the PHS route for a 1 year trial to see if it would result in increased use/shorter runs/late start. Ms. Balboni felt that less students riding was more seasonal as they become juniors and seniors and start to drive to school themselves. She does not feel there would be a change. Ms. Balboni stated most parents

are not aware of a central stop at RJH for the PHS route. Ms. Anderson suggested we advertise on our board in front of RJH. She further stated that Rye would like to have the ability to request 2 late starts. Dr. Cushing believed this would not be a problem because after Rye, the routes are done. Mr. Schwartz brought up the no idle issue. Ms. Richardson stated that she called the bus company and that there is a law preventing busses from idling. The Board agreed that at this time they will not pursue seat belts on busses for field trips and are not interested in adding another bus to the PHS route.

**Track & Safety Committee:** Mr. Schwartz reported that Mr. Mikolaities will draw up the plans and he, Mrs. Moynahan, and Dr. Cushing will present to the town to see what they could do for the track. To this point Mr. Mikolaities has rendered his services for free. Mr. Schwartz asked the board if they would agree to authorize payment in the amount of \$6,500.00, or wait until the selectmen meeting. Ms. Anderson made a motion to move forward if the selectman were on board. Ms. Balboni stated there are still options we have not considered regarding the track and the road. Mrs. Moynahan discussed fencing that could be used. Mr. Schwartz stated that we could come back to the track issue but we should get an estimate for both from Mr. Mikolaities.

**Policies:**

KF – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, Use of School Facilities: Mrs. Moynahan asked if we got pricing for use of the fields and library. Mr. Schwartz replied that we have pricing for the fields but not the library. The Board discussed the cost of renting the fields. Ms. Balboni said the fee for the library should be more than the cost of a classroom. Mrs. Moynahan suggested if the classroom fee was \$50.00 the fee for the library should be \$100.00. The Board agreed. Mr. Schwarz suggested adding “town government” to the first sentence in the second paragraph, to read, “Any group or individual requesting use of school facilities, other than use for school activities or town government”. Ms. Anderson suggested we drop the fee for use of a classroom or the library for Rye groups, but keep the fee for use of the stage, gym and cafeteria. Ms. Balboni made a motion to adopt this 2<sup>nd</sup> reading as amended, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Vote: Unanimously approved.

IJ – 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, Instructional Materials: Dr. Cushing stated the GCS School Board changed the word funding to providing. Ms. Balboni made a motion to adopt this 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and change the word funding to providing, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Vote: Unanimously approved.

JICK - Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention, Bullying: Mr. Schwartz would like to add the sentence “expect parents to respect the policy”. Ms. Balboni suggested school educators should be changed to staff members. The Board also discussed the last sentence regarding consequences for behavior and who should be responsible. Dr. Cushing recommended we have our attorney look at this policy before adopting. Mrs. Moynahan pointed out that under disruptive behavior it should read administrators not administrator. Mrs. Balboni recommended changing educators to staff members again for consistency. Ms. Anderson made a motion to approve on 1<sup>st</sup> reading seconded by Mrs. Balboni as amended. Vote: Unanimously approved.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:**

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to go into non-public session at 9:07 p.m. to discuss negotiations and personnel. Unanimously approved on a role call vote.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

The Board returned to public session at 9:37 p.m. Ms. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve and seal the non-public minutes of August 5, 2008. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Balboni proposed, and Mrs. Moynahan seconded, a motion to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation to resolve the issue with RESPA over the status of the Supervisory Head Custodian.(SHC) Vote: Unanimously approved. This vote ensures that the SHC position is not a

RESPA position, that there is a stipend of \$1,200 each at RJH and RES for the “lead” custodian that covers for the SHC from time to time. The Board agrees the present custodial staff shall be exempt from (5-7.1) outsourcing per language in the current bargaining agreement through the budget cycle in 2011.

**ADJOURN:**

Ms. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

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School Board Secretary