

These minutes were approved by the Grade 5 Transition Subcommittee on October 5, 2018 meeting (9-0)

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT

RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Grade 5 Transition Subcommittee Meeting was held at Rye Elementary School on Friday, September 7, 2018 at 7:00am.

PRESENT

School Board Members: Jeanne Moynahan, Paula Tsetsilas

Administration: Salvatore Petralia, Superintendent
Suzanne Lull, Principal RES
Marie Soucy, Principal RJH

Staff: Eric Ross (Grade 3), Sarah Harrington (RJH teacher), Andrea Papoutsy (RES music and Association Representative)

Parents: Celeste Christo (Grade 4 parent rep), Sharon Scott (Grade k-3 parent rep)

Visitors: Jess Moran, Lauren Flynn, Chrissy Leblond, Kim Piela

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Petralia called the meeting to order at 7:00 am.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

Committee members introduced themselves. Committee members are noted above (school board members, administration, staff and 2 parents).

ROLE OF SUBCOMMITTEE AND PROTOCOLS

Mr. Petralia thanked all members taking part in this committee and all members received handouts as it pertains to the agenda for the meeting; the preliminary timeline, draft of the implementation plan, grades 5-8 school configurations in NH by population and projected student enrollment.

SELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Petralia asked that a chairperson be selected for this committee. Ms. Moynahan made a motion to nominate Paula Tsetsilas as chair of the committee, seconded by Mr. Ross all were in favor 10-0.

Ms. Tsetsilas made a motion to nominate Ms. Soucy as co-chair. All were in favor 10-0.

Chairpersons: Ms. Tsetsilas and Ms. Soucy.

REVIEW PROCESS AND PRELIMINARY TIMELINE

Ms. Tsetsilas reviewed the preliminary timeline (prepared on 9/2/18). Edits/additions to the table as decided in today's meeting noted in **BOLD**.

Date	Event
Sept 7	Initial Committee meeting
Late September	Tour Grades 5-8 schools
October 5 at 7 am.	Second Committee meeting Read-out and "share" of school visits Begin weighing "pros/cons" of preliminary scenarios Location: RJH Cafeteria
October 18 at 10 am and 6 pm	Parent/Staff/Community working sessions to evaluate various teaching models. Working sessions (Ms. Lull and Ms. Soucy could each attend 1) Location: RJH Cafeteria

October 25 at 7 am	<p>Third Committee meeting</p> <p>Review feedback from working sessions</p> <p>Administration to begin recommendation for preferred model</p> <p>Location: RJH Cafeteria</p>
November 8	<p>Community forum/panel- review process and present Administration's recommendation of desired model</p> <p>Experts on panel to take questions</p> <p>Location: RJH Cafeteria</p>
Mid/Late November	<p>Announce selected model</p>
February	<p>Internal posting for staff positions; Name 5th grade teacher team</p>

INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR RJH STRUCTURE

Ms. Tsetsilas discussed need to have a goal and to be able to have sustainability for a period of time. The recommendation was to look at a 5 year plan. *All committee members were in agreement with identifying a model that is sustainable for 5 years.* School board has been talking about the long-term plan for students and whether to partner with Greenland middle school population; looking at this option is the long-term recommendation of the School Use Feasibility Committee. Ms. Tsetsilas mentioned that Ms. Honda, School Board Chairperson, would like to find an online feedback loop, to allow parents to provide feedback. **Task:** Ms. Christo offered to touch base with Ms. Honda to assist with feedback loop capabilities.

Ms. Tsetsilas reviewed document titled "Implementation Plan for 5th Grade Transition (draft 9/3/18)." See document for details. Ms. Papoutsy is currently planning for K-5 and can break out the budget once determined how staffing, etc will work. Mr. Petralia stated that it falls under the umbrella of Rye Elementary School (RES) currently and that staff should budget as needed and work with their Rye Junior High (RJH) counterpart to make sure everything is aligned. Celebration plans for 4th graders- Ms. Lull is working on this currently. Teachers have been talking about it and adjusted student council and clap out ceremony, etc. She plans to

invite parents into the conversation just like the 5th grade fun finale. **Task:** Ms. Lull and Ms. Christo to touch base after Ms. Lull meets with her leadership team later in September. Ms. Christo mentioned the yearbook (how to handle), the importance of getting student input and having the guidance counselor involved to help hear the students concerns and thoughts and to bring the 4th graders into the conversation. **Task:** Ms. Lull will look into details for clapout, yearbook and connecting 4th graders with the guidance counselor.

Ms. Tsetsilas discussed space issues: town hall has needs; rye rec had article on ballot two years ago to explore costs for a community center which failed. Much of rec programming happens at 9 different locations. Last year's School Use Feasibility Committee (SUFC) identified how the town could use some of the available school space- opportunity for Rec to use space for daytime programming and cross generational programming at RES. Ms. Lull mentioned the benefits of collaborating with the older generation ie. Writing buddies with the 2nd grade, etc. Ms. Tsetsilas mentioned that the Rye Recreation Dept runs program out of a trailer currently and possibility of having summer programs at RES. Families often connect with rec programs initially when enter the town; to transfer it to RES may be more welcoming to families coming to town. Rye Recreation program's decline potentially due to it being less appealing as it is housed inside a trailer. Ms. Tsetsilas also cited that Rye Recreation is looking into after school programming for current junior high students. Mr. Petralia gave kudos to RES for welcoming the preschool. Since it has moved to Rye, the enrollment has increased and Ms. Tsetsilas explained the School Board's hope is it will act as a feeder program into our district. Ms. Tsetsilas mentioned utilizing promotional materials to announce the restructuring to the public at large and that parent volunteers will be helpful in this process. She also mentioned that this may be an opportunity to rebrand the school ie. Rye Middle School, which would need to go for a vote before the town. The town is fond of the same Rye Junior High, per Ms. Moynahan. **Task:** Ms. Tsetsilas to work to identify promotional materials and would like parent volunteers ie. Trifold brochure for realtors, branding video, need to set aside a line items for this for budget. Ms. Tsetsilas mentioned extracurricular activities, such as sports programming, and asked how the change will impact the structure. New 5th graders will have access with band, chorus, and opportunities with school play. Ms. Christo mentioned parents are concerned regarding the social/emotional piece with the transition. She suggested that current 4th and 5th graders participate in activities together at RES this school year so they have a stronger connection at RJH next year. She was educated in a Gr5-8 school with 5/6th together at middle school and 7/8 together. Ms. Papoutsy mentioned that she is trying to connect the grades at RES.

Ms. Soucy mentioned that the 6th graders have a closer social/emotional connection to 5th graders than to 7th. Mr. Petralia mentioned that it is likely that staff at RES will be at RJH so that students will have a connection. Ms. Christo mentioned that initial feedback she has received from 4th graders is positive. This group has had co-teaching as well. It was also mentioned that money should be put in the budget for professional development needs. Ms. Tsetsilas asked whether there will be any busing implications and how the drop off will work. Mr. Petralia stated that this will be a SAU50 piece and the contract is currently up and will need to be

included in the RFP (request for proposal) but that he doesn't see an issue. **Task:** Ms. Tsetsilas to add: Yearbook, social emotional concerns, ample gym use to the implementation doc.

REVIEW DISTRICTS WITH GRADE 5-8 MODEL

Ms. Soucy discussed the current model at RJH. The 1st floor of RJH is where the 6th grade currently resides. Preliminary thinking is that the 6th grade would move to another location on 2nd floor and 5th graders to take 1st floor (downstairs). 5th graders would not have any interactions with 7th, 8th grade and would be located near the nurse and guidance counselor. 6th grade would be in their own pod. Currently there are 3-person teams (math, science, language arts and each of them teach social studies). Could potentially have a 5/6th grade grouping. 5th would have opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. Ms. Soucy mentioned there are other models with 2 person teams (math/science, social/language arts) and others are contained. Ms. Soucy's previous teaching and administrative experience was in a Gr5-8 model (York Middle School). For two years there were 3 person and 4-person teams. It was then switched to a 2-person team with one self-contained classroom. Ms. Soucy mentions better success for 2 and 3 person teams as 4 person teams seemed too much for the kids. Mr. Petralia noted that soliciting information from parents is very important and needs to happen first as it will have implications for staffing. A pivotal piece is the number of students coming through the cohort. Ms. Soucy mentioned that there is a lot of community building and team building at RJH and that with a self-contained classroom and a 2-person team, the contained class may not feel as involved and this is something that will need to be considered.

Ms. Tsetsilas reviewed the projected student enrollment data as noted in the working documentation titled "projected student enrollments as of 10/1/16." The current 4th grade total is 43 and 5th grade is 38, with two teachers in 5th. 6th grade total is currently 35 with three dedicated teachers (12 students per class). The suggested maximum class size is 18-22 for 6-8 graders per School Board policy. **Task:** Ms. Tsetsilas requested that Amy Ransom, SAU50 Business Administrator, update the projection of enrollment.

SELECT DISTRICT & ARRANGE TOURING DATES

Ms. Tsetsilas suggested visiting and observing three schools with a Gr 5-8 structure, splitting up the committee and reporting back. The committee referred to the data provided titled "Grades 5-8 Middle School Configurations in NH by Population." Ms. Harrington recommended visiting Oyster River due to it being economically similar. Ms. Tsetsilas suggested visiting Berwick Academy and Ms. Soucy agreed stating it would be good to see a smaller school that is high performing. Ms. Lull recommended visiting York as they are larger but would like to see how they do their pods. The committee was all in agreement on these schools to tour. Mr. Petralia recommended that one person coordinate it for the entire committee. **Task:** Paula and Marie

to discuss. Ms. Harrington mentioned asking the schools about their progressions and timelines over the years and what drove their changes. **Task:** Ms. Soucy to create script for those touring schools to have benchmarks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Piela, a 4th and 6th grade parent, discussed concerns about social and emotional piece and would like to see more communication to the parents. She recommended that other parents attend the committee meeting to listen. Mr. Petralia recommended **task:** using school messenger to get the information out. **Task:** Ms. Tsetsilas and Ms. Honda to work on creating drop down menus on the RES website to have it transparent to the public. **Task:** Creating a recap of this meeting and sending out, by day's end Monday, to the community (bullet points). Ms. Piela and Ms. Moran mentioned that they do not feel that a formal announcement has gone out about the transition, other than the request for committee members. They mentioned that the email that went out following the School Board's vote to reconfigure the schools in July was interpreted as 'exploring' not that it's happening. Ms. Moran mentioned that there is a short runway to get everything done and that we should prioritize what are the most important items and what needs a longer runway. Ms. Moran also asked that RES start conversations with the kids.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Moynahan, seconded by Ms. Lull, the committee adjourned their meeting at 8:17 am. Vote 10-0.

Minutes recorded by Sharon Scott