



# Superintendent's Bulletin

September 2023 - Volume 12 - Issue 1

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Dear RCSD Community Member,

Each September, just before the start of school, all of our teachers, staff members, and administrators gather in the Performing Arts Center (PAC) at the High School for "Opening Day." Everyone listens to a few remarks to kick off the year and gather our collective focus before heading to the schools to prepare for students to arrive the next day. I want to share what I spoke about this year.



Anyone who has ever come to a Board meeting or watched one online knows that we spend a lot of time thinking about and talking about The Rye Commitment. It's the guiding force behind everything we do. One of the "promises" in The Rye Commitment is to our students, and it goes like this:

*TO STUDENTS: We will provide the necessary support for you to receive an education that helps you become socially responsible, caring citizens who can think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate, and creatively solve problems in a diverse global environment.*

I spent the summer doing some research into the needs of today's workforce to see if what we are saying in The Rye Commitment and doing here in the school district aligns with what employers say they are looking for. Here is what I read:

- World Economic Forum - *Future of Jobs Report 2023*
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - *Skills for 2030*
- McKinsey & Company - *Defining the Skills Citizens will Need in the Future World of Work*
- Forbes magazine - *The Top 10 Most In-Demand Skills For The Next 10 Years*

What I learned from my research is that what we are talking about in The Rye Commitment, what we talk about with the community, and what we are committed to doing in our schools is very much on track to respond to the needs of the now and future world of work. The reports say employers are looking for people who are critical thinkers, who have emotional intelligence, are flexible, who are digitally literate, creative communicators, and who can collaborate. These were the top skills and dispositions that employers are looking for.

If we go beyond just the needs of the workforce and look at the much bigger picture of the highly complex problems facing our world today, we see that solving them will require people working across disciplines, content areas, and industries and requires a level of collaboration we have not seen before.

So for us, as an organization that is committed to developing students who are curious, who are socially responsible, who can collaborate and creatively solve problems, it was very reaffirming. We are always looking at alignment within our system and outside as part of what we do.

What does this all mean? The world is changing and our graduates, whether they are going on to colleges, trade schools, the military, or the world of work, need very different skills than in the past. The path to success for our students is no longer clear. In my day, there was a certainty if you got good grades in school, scored well on the SAT, ACT, and AP exams, attended the 'right' school, and lived in a town like Rye. All these things added up to acceptance to a top college or university and a good job. That certainty just doesn't exist for our students anymore. (For those of you interested in learning more about this topic, please mark your calendars for a talk we are co-sponsoring with Rye Country Day on November 29 at 7:00 p.m. given by Jeff Selingo, author of *Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions*).

For us as a school district, this means that we must continue to strengthen our emphasis on those skills and dispositions the workforce is telling us are needed. We need to be very reflective about our practices and make modifications where necessary. We cannot stay where we are and do what is comfortable for us. We need to, as a system, shift gears when necessary to give our kids all the tools for success beyond Rye -- that's our job. We have to uphold The Rye Commitment and its promise to students to become critical thinkers, collaborators, effective communicators, and socially responsible caring citizens who are creative problem solvers.

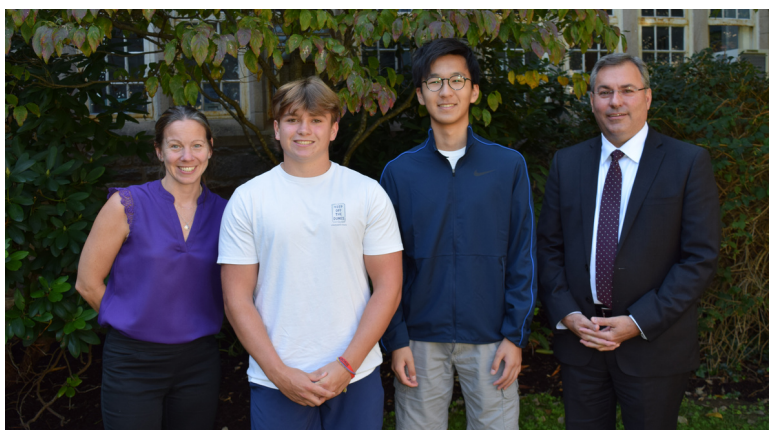
And I ended with this: it's not easy. Reflecting on your own practice is not easy. Looking critically at what you have been doing for 5, 10, 20, or even 30 years is really hard, but we have the support and infrastructure necessary to make those shifts, and it's our responsibility to do it. And, moreover, it is well within our capacity and ability to do it!

Sincerely,



**Eric Byrne, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

## RHS's National Merit Scholar Semifinalists



*From left to right: RHS Principal Suzanne Kelly Short, Paddy Harrigan, Dan Yamaguchi, and Superintendent Dr. Eric Byrne*

Two Rye High School seniors were named National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists in mid-September. The students earned the recognition by scoring well on the PSAT/NMSQT test taken during their junior year. Of the over 1.3 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools nationwide who took the test, more than 6,000 were named semifinalists. Rye High School's two semifinalists are **Jeffrey (Paddy) Harrigan** and **Dan Yamaguchi**. They will be given the Rye Recognition of Excellence Award at an October Board of Education meeting. Congratulations to the students, their families, and teachers!

# Congratulations!

The Rye City School District Teacher of the Year is nominated annually by their fellow teachers, administrators, and current and former parents and students. The teacher selected for the next school year is announced at Closing Day at the end of the school year.

Our past Teachers of the Year have personified the finest attributes of the teaching profession: dedication, commitment, and visible caring for their vocation, their students, and their colleagues. Those of you who know our teacher of the year will unequivocally agree that they fit that description to a tee. Drum roll please...she is Midland School's **Stephanie Lauro**!



"The secret sauce is Mrs. Lauro's Book of Positives. It's what all her students 40 years out will be talking about."

"Mrs. Lauro is the ultimate believer and reinforcer of a rising tide lifts all ships 10 years later my kids still adore Mrs. Lauro."

"While we have had many amazing experiences within the Rye City School District, our year with Mrs. Lauro has been exceptional from the start. Mrs. Lauro is a talented and gifted teacher who intrinsically motivates her students to critically think and learn organically each day."

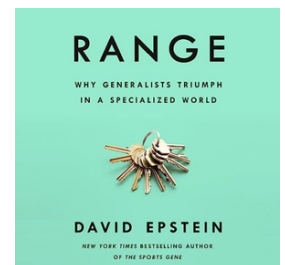
"There isn't a student Mrs. Lauro can't teach or connect with"

"Mrs. Lauro is an educator who is exceptionally skilled, organized, dedicated, respected, and inspires students with cultural and cognitive differences while providing a wonderful classroom experience."

## A Range of Abilities

Every year, at the beginning of the school year, I give every employee in the school district a book. *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World* by David Epstein is this year's selection. I have RHS English Teacher Anthony Fabrizzio to thank for bringing it to my attention a few years ago. I read it then, but shared it with my colleagues just this year; it is very timely in that it speaks to what we are facing as educators and parents.

It was written for a business audience and was shortlisted for the *Financial Times*/McKinsey best business book of the year. But it applies to parents, coaches, bosses -- really anyone who is looking to identify the skills needed to succeed in today's complex, interconnected, and rapidly changing world.



Epstein, who is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Sports Gene*, looked at the world's top performers, from professional athletes to Nobel laureates, and found that early specialization is the exception, not the rule. He discovered that in most fields, and particularly in those that are complex and unpredictable, generalists, not specialists, are the ones who excel. He found that generalists often find their path late and juggle many interests rather than focusing on just one. As a result, they're more creative, flexible, and agile, and able to make connections better than their peers who are honed in on one specialty.

Epstein concludes that people who think broadly and critically, work across contexts, and embrace diverse experiences and perspectives will increasingly thrive. Something for all of us to think about!

# Commendations



*The RHS 2022-23 NYSPHSAA Award*

- **Rye High School** was recognized as a NYSPHSAA School of Distinction. NYSPHSAA is the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, a non-profit voluntary educational service organization comprised of public, parochial and private schools providing equitable and safe interschool athletics for students in grades 7-12. The award signifies that all of Rye High School's eligible teams for the 2022-23 school year met the GPA requirement of 90 or above. The following 29 teams are included in the award:
  - Baseball
  - Boys basketball
  - Girls basketball
  - Competitive cheer
  - Game day cheer
  - Boys cross country
  - Girls cross country
  - Field hockey
  - Football
  - Boys golf
  - Girls golf
  - Ice hockey
  - Boys lacrosse
  - Girls lacrosse
  - Boys skiing
  - Girls skiing
  - Boys soccer
  - Girls soccer
  - Softball
  - Boys swimming
  - Girls swimming
  - Boys tennis
  - Girls tennis
  - Boys indoor track
  - Girls Indoor track
  - Boys outdoor track
  - Girls outdoor track
  - Girls volleyball
  - Wrestling
- Senior **Nicholas Echlov** spent his summer working on a science research project and contributed to a paper that was published in the September issue of the American Heart Association's Stroke. The paper is called No-Reflow Post-Recanalization in Acute Ischemic Stroke: Mechanisms, Measurements, and Molecular Markers. Click [here](#) to read the excerpt
- A piece of senior **Storey Marra's** art was exhibited at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York City for a late August exhibition called "Memories of Childhood"
- RHS Class of 2022 graduate **Leyla Murati** received an Honorable mention in the Seal of Biliteracy Achievement Scholarship Awards given by Language Testing International (LTI). LTI administers the official American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages language proficiency assessment which students use to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy
- Senior **Lilly Peters** was asked to write an article for the National publication Seventeen magazine "No Follows. No Likes. Just Deep Connection - All From A Book." Click [here](#) to read it
- Senior **Ty Ramachandran** was named Rye High School's Section 1 Student Athlete Representative. Throughout the school year, he will represent RHS on the NYSPHSAA Student Athlete Advisory Committee
- Senior **Samantha Ryan** was given the College Board's National Hispanic Recognition Award (NHRA). The award recognizes students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher and outstanding performance on the PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and/or AP Exams
- Senior **Cole Thomas'** boat won a gold medal at the National Championship in the Varsity Men's 8+ rowing final in mid June

# Mello Scholarship Award Winners



*From left to right: Gianluca Santarelli, Doug Mello, and A.J. Miller*

Each year, before the annual Rye-Harrison Game, two seniors from Rye High School and Harrison High School receive the Christopher Mello Award. The memorial scholarship award was established by the family of Chris Mello, the Rye High School Class of 1994 football captain who died on 9/11. Since 2002, the foundation has given out more than \$80,000 in scholarships to Rye and Harrison football players. The two winners met on the 50 yardline of McGillicuddy Stadium field to receive their awards from Doug Mello, Chris's father. This year's winners are **A.J. Miller** from Rye and **Gianluca Santarelli** from Harrison, both of whom were chosen for best embodying the spirit and character that Mello exhibited in life.

## Looking Ahead



### **Monday, October 9**

Columbus Day  
Schools and Offices Closed

### **Tuesday, October 10**

Board of Education Meeting  
7:30 p.m.  
RMS Multipurpose Room

### **Tuesday, October 24**

Board of Education Meeting  
7:30 p.m.  
RMS Multipurpose Room