



# Superintendent's Bulletin

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Dear RCSD Community Member,

Families who are new to Rye are often surprised to learn that there is an annual public vote on the school district's budget. Their consternation is understandable; after all, there is no other New York budget you *can* vote on. The City budget is decided by the Council and the State budget by lawmakers in Albany. But by law, every school district in New York must have its budget approved by the communities they serve.

Next year's budget is what is known as an "override" budget. An override budget is one that goes over the State's 2% tax cap. It is not an uncommon thing: the City of Rye has had two override budgets in the past years: 2017 and 2023. Our neighbors in Harrison, Scarsdale, and Chappaqua are all proposing override budgets this year. It has been some time since the RCSD has had one: the last was in 2015, before many of our younger parents moved to Rye. The cost of everything has gone up, to the point where if we were to stay within the tax cap limit, we would need to substantially cut teachers and programs.

The 2024-2025 school district budget maintains all current programs, supports small class sizes, and updates curriculum without adding any new teachers, staff, or programs.

I invite you to learn more about the 2024-2025 school district budget by attending (or watching later) the Budget Hearing at the May 7 Board of Education meeting, or by reading the Focus on Excellence budget newsletter which will appear in your mailboxes in early May.

In the meantime, please mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 21. Polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Rye Middle School gym. For the first time, we can offer early voting by mail for those who are interested in having a ballot mailed to them. Please click [here](#) to fill out an application.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools!

Sincerely,

Eric Byrne, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



# Two RCSD Faculty Join Dyslexia Task Force

Earlier this month, we got the news that two RCSD reading and writing experts have been appointed to the New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) Task Force on Dyslexia and Dysgraphia: **Dr. Tricia Murray**, the RCSD Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Instructional Coach **Melissa Ross**.

The Task Force was established by New York State Commissioner of Education Betty Rosa in response to new New York State requirements related to dyslexia and dysgraphia (an inability to write based on a learning disability). The Task Force is charged with preparing a comprehensive report due this coming December of findings and recommendations related to:

- Screening methods
- Reading interventions
- Educational supports
- Stakeholders
- Public dissemination of findings



To have one Rye faculty member nominated to serve on the Task Force would be a very big deal; to have two is a great big deal. The Task Force convenes on May 13. Kudos to Dr. Murray and Ms. Ross!

## RHS Chess Makes Moves



Rye High School doesn't have an official chess club yet (the club application is in process), but four students have banded together to compete in tournament-level chess. They brought home a 3rd place trophy from the 56th Annual New York State Scholastic Championship, held March 9-10 in Saratoga Springs. The players were **Connor Galvez** (9th), **Kasper Hurst** (9th), **Zachary Ramsey** (11th), and **Tayga Vural** (9th).

The next stop for the group was the U.S. National High School Championships in Baltimore, MD, on April 12-14.

Zachary, Connor, Kasper, and Tayga played seven games with a duration of up to 3 hours and 20 minutes for each game. The boys came in 8th place in the tournament in a field of 1,900 entrants from grades K-12. It was a tough competition, but the boys were happy with the outcome and received another trophy. Congratulations -- we can't wait to see your next moves!

# RCSD is a Best Community for Music Education

For the second consecutive year, the Rye City School District was named a “Best Community for Education” district by the NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. It was one of only eight school districts in Westchester to receive the designation. Now in its 25th year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in providing music access and education to all students.



To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the RCSD answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified by school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“Music education plays an integral role in the development of our students. In addition to fostering academic skills like critical thinking, it promotes social growth through teamwork and collaboration,” said Tyler Schwirian, the RCSD Music Department Coordinator. He continued, “This special designation reaffirms our commitment to providing music education that is inclusive and accessible for all of our students and celebrates the incredible work of our RCSD music faculty, who go above and beyond to create opportunities for our students to learn, create, and find joy in music.”

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported partly by the National Association of Music Merchants and its 15,000 global member companies and individual professionals worldwide. The foundation advances active participation in music-making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs. For more information, visit [www.nammfoundation.org](http://www.nammfoundation.org). Congratulations to all the teachers, parents, and talented student musicians in the RCSD that make this award possible!

## RMS Squash Team



*The RMS girls squash team received Rye Recognition of Excellence awards at the April 9 Board of Education meeting for winning the National Tournament*



# Spotlight on the Arts

## RHS Arts Awards



The annual Rye High School Arts awards took place on Thursday, April 25, this year. The Arts Awards recognize students for their dedication to the visual, performing, and literary arts and to music. 72 students from the senior class received recognition awards; 13 were recognized by faculty for achievement in their artistic discipline. The evening began with a reception in the hallway adjacent to the Performing Arts Center where student artwork was on display for all to see. The awards ceremony followed and was emceed by seniors **Sofie Fu** and **Ty Bibas**. Students treated the audience to band, strings, and vocal performances and a prose reading as part of the program. Kudos to Rye High School Art Department Coordinator **Tony Campell**, Assistant Principal **Christina Cannon**, and Senior Office Assistant **Anne Galleta** for organizing the event on behalf of Rye High School's senior class artists of every medium!

### Achievement Awards

#### *Art*

Photography: **Meredith Ward**

Painting: **Laura Svoboda**

2 D Design: **Marra Storey**

Visual Arts: **Lara Oktay**

#### *Creative Writing*

Creative Writing: **Isabel Godden**

#### *Music*

Band/Percussion: **Karis Repetto**

Band: **Takimi Otani**

Orchestra: **Matthew Pelligrini**

Chorus: **Eva Middleton**

Digital Music: **Ty Bibas**

#### *Theater*

Acting: **Mathias Ramos**

Show Choir: **Erin Ellis**

Stage Craft: **Matthew Pelligrini**



# Commendations



*The RHS varsity softball team (with coaches Alex Tejera and Victoria Dosso) were the winners of the Have A Heart Tournament*

- The RHS **girls varsity softball team** won the 2nd annual Have a Heart - Peter Balic Memorial Tournament on April 20
- Seniors **Matthew Pelligrini** and **William Soviero** were winners of the 2024 Greenwich Hospital Medical Staff's Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service award representing Rye High School. The awards recognize area high school students who exemplify the civil rights icon's ideals
- Senior rugby co-captain **Jack Acciavatti** was named Lion's Club Athlete of the Month for March
- Senior **Nicolas Echlov**, winner of the 2024 Westchester Brain Bee Competition, competed in the National Brain Bee Championship April 19-21 at the University of Central Florida in Orlando
- Junior **Ella Froah** was named a junior commissioner on the City of Rye Conservation Commission for 2024-2025. Junior **Leo Roth** is the outgoing Junior Commissioner, having served for the 2023-2024 year
- Senior girls varsity lacrosse attacker **Lilly Whaling** scored her 200th goal in a winning game over Bronxville on April 25

## Looking Ahead



### **Tuesday, May 7**

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

### **Tuesday, May 21**

Budget Vote and Trustee Election  
Polls are open 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. RMS Gymnasium

### **Tuesday, May 21**

Board of Education Meeting  
7:30 RMS Multipurpose Room - NYSSMA student recognition

### **Monday, May 27**

Memorial Day  
Schools and Offices Closed