

VALUE Education

RyeNeck Schools

September 2024

Superintendent's Notebook

by Eric Lutinski, Ed.D.

Greetings to our extended Rye Neck community! In an era of websites, emails, and texts, I'm glad that we have not fully let go of "good old fashioned" print communication. I appreciate the simplicity and ease of reading actual books, magazines, newspapers, and of course, our Value Education newsletter, which is sent directly to every mailbox in the RNUFSD district.

Our campuses are busy places and July and August were no exceptions. We had two large projects commence this summer: the first being a full repaving and site work at Daniel Warren, which was substantially completed for the start of school. Completed portions of the project include paving and drainage work, a new fenced-in enclosure for our dumpsters and compost bins, and a new stormwater management system with underground rechargers. Still to be completed are portions of the fencing, as well as lighting along the path to the Florence Street lot. We anticipate that this project will be fully complete by the end of October.

The second project involves the restoration of the former walking and bike path and preservation of a portion of the temporary parking lot at the MS/HS. The new bike and walking path has been installed and was ready for use on the first day of school. The rest of the project will continue throughout September. Once completed, we will have over 30 new (and much needed) parking spaces.

We are thankful for the community and its support of both of these projects. The Daniel Warren work is part of the approved use of our 2022 Capital Reserve Fund. This project, along with others, was approved by the community at the May 2024 vote. The restoration of the bike and walking path, as well as making a permanent parking lot, was made possible by inclusion of transfer to capital in our annual budget.

[Continued on page 2](#)



Board of Education Update

by Jason Carmel, President

The start of the academic year is a time of new beginning for the Board of Education as well as the students, teachers, and staff at Rye Neck. We welcomed two new members of the Board, Nikki Barker and Halli Gatenio. Jason Carmel was elected Board President after Rebecca Mansell, last year's president, finished her term.

Erica Wagner will continue as Vice President of the Board. We met for a retreat on August 21st to establish our goals for the year, which will be published on the Board section of our newly designed website.

Our goals for this year encompass the main duties of the Board: setting policy, financial stewardship, and oversight of the Superintendent. For policy, we are engaging in a two-year overhaul of our policy manual through the New York State School Board Association. This service will bring our policies in line with model policies while enabling us to respond to our local needs where appropriate. For financial stewardship, we are engaging in long-term financial planning that will address the renewal of the teacher contract and the building conditions survey that we completed last year. Our goal is to retain talent and improve facilities while keeping under the state tax cap. Finally, we will work with Superintendent Lutinski to ensure that the district is managed expertly. A key component for this year is to execute on the goals of our district's strategic plan. You will see that the overall goals will turn into specific and measurable strategies with timelines for each.

We want to make sure that our Board meetings and deliberations are as transparent as possible. The schedule of full board meetings is available, and the agenda for the meetings will be published the week before each meeting. The approximate times for each agenda item has been added in case community members want to come for



[Continued on page 2](#)

Superintendent's Notebook

Continued

We look forward to the completion of both of these projects and to starting the other projects that were approved at the May 2024 vote as part of the use of the 2022 Capital Reserve Fund, including a new lower roof at the MS/HS gymnasium; masonry repairs at both Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows; as well as engaging our architect to perform an athletic field study to assess the current layout of the fields at the MS/HS, an analysis of adding additional HVAC capacity at Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows, and exploring an energy performance contract to update district lighting, electrical panels, and end of life HVAC units.

Finally, we eagerly kicked off the new school year with our Rye Neck Strategic Plan in place. Our collective "head, heart, and hands" represent our target areas for change. Over the course of the next year and half, we will be working to equip all learners to approach problems successfully; to build transformative environments in and outside of the classroom; and to design systems that will allow our professional learning community to create transformative learning experiences. 2024-25 is our first step toward a broad new horizon for the Rye Neck learning community.



President's Report continued

part of the meeting. Last year, we began to video every planning meeting, in addition to the regular board meetings. The meetings can be viewed in real time, and videos are available for viewing after the meetings. The calendar of all committee meetings will also be available, and all are open to the public.

Finally, we encourage you to get involved by attending meetings and by volunteering for one of our committees. We have positions available on Audit, Policy, Technology, and Facilities Committees. The roles of committee members are to ensure that community interests are being addressed and to advise using your expertise. We have tried to make the application process and service on these committees as simple as possible. We are always impressed by how freely people give of themselves at Rye Neck through being class parents or school advisory board, PTSA, Booster Club, and School Foundation members. Please consider applying your talents and commitment to one of these committees.

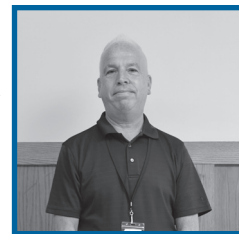
With great expectations for a wonderful year!

Jason Carmel for the Board of Education

Welcome New Staff

Andrew Benkwitt - Monitor, HS

Andrew has lived in Mamaroneck all his life and is a graduate of Mamaroneck High School where he played football and lacrosse. After he graduated, he began his 41 year career at Ralph's Electric Appliance Store.



Grace Cassese - English Teacher, MS

Mrs. Cassese graduated from Fordham University with her BA in English, and then continued on to Manhattanville College, where she received her Masters Degree in Education. After student teaching in both New Rochelle and Rye Neck Schools, she went on to begin her full-time teaching career at Middle School 390, where she taught for fifteen years. She currently lives in Rye Brook and enjoys reading, traveling with her family and hiking with the family dog.



Christy Curran - Elementary Teacher, DW

Christy Curran is a passionate teacher, and learner. She started her career in Pinellas County Florida teaching fourth graders at Rawlings Elementary. She has been a literacy consultant with Dr. Gravity Goldberg LLC, Leading with Heart, Inc, and TCWRP. She is passionate about creating nurturing environments for all children to be their best selves.



Angela DeRosso - English Teacher, MS/HS

Ms. Derosso has been teaching 7th and 8th grade English in Westchester County for the past five years and is excited to begin teaching at Rye Neck this year! Outside of the classroom, Ms. DeRosso enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with her toy poodle, Tyson.



Rachel Druker - ENL Teacher, MS/HS

Mrs. Druker has 12 years of teaching experience and holds masters degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Lehman College and in International Affairs from New York University. She is dedicated to supporting multilingual learners. Mrs. Druker enjoys traveling and spending time with her family.



Welcome New Staff

Hanan Eldahry - Science Teacher, MS

Ms. Eldahry is a dedicated Living Environment teacher. She has a rich background in healthcare and science journalism. She formerly taught at the Bronx High School for the Visual Arts. As a Pelham trustee, she is committed to community service. Ms. Eldahry strives to inspire her students through engaging science lessons.



Hayley Graney - Science Teacher, MS/HS

Ms. Graney has spent the last six years teaching science and leading the STEM Club at a middle school in the Bronx. A graduate of Manhattan College and Saint John's University, she spends her free time baking, traveling locally and watching Gilmore Girls. She loves coffee so much that she sometimes works as a barista on a local coffee truck.



Gwen Hoeler - Science Teacher, HS

With a passion for science education and a dedication to student success, Ms. Hoeler brings innovative teaching methods and enthusiasm to create a dynamic classroom environment where students thrive. Having a deep-rooted love for all things scientific, she ignites curiosity and a love for learning in her students.



Catherine Hynes - English Teacher Leave Replacement, MS

Ms. Hynes graduated from SUNY Oswego with two degrees and is currently working on her Masters in Literacy from the University at Buffalo. Before Rye Neck, Ms. Hynes worked in Pelham and a few schools in upstate NY. When she isn't working, Ms. Hynes loves reading, writing, baking, and snowboarding.



Daniel Linehan - PE Teacher/TA, HS

Mr. Linehan graduated from Tappan Zee High School in 2020, then attended SUNY Cortland where he was captain of the basketball team and graduated summa cum laude. He is very excited to be at Rye Neck and looks forward to working with the students and staff.



Mack Lipinski - Monitor, HS

Mack is a retired NYPD detective with 22 years of service. He is an avid outdoorsman and a father of 3. Mack loves to travel and has plans to sail around the world when his kids get older.



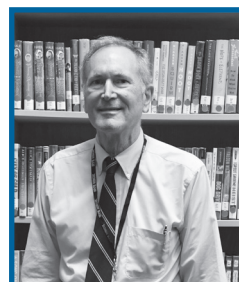
Liz Merkel - Elementary Teacher, FEB

Liz is a dedicated educator with over 11 years of experience, including time in NYC Public Schools and most recently in Tuckahoe. She holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from Mercy University. Elizabeth enjoys going for walks, spending time with family, reading to her kids, and drinking iced coffee.



Matthew McMurray - Science Teacher, HS

Dr. Matthew McMurray, a Michigan native, is a graduate of Wayne State University. He earned a master's degree from C.C.N.Y. and a Ph.D. from The Graduate Center/CUNY. His hobbies include reading, foreign travel, and listening to music. He enjoys a range of sports and coaches football and tennis.



Kendyl Nethercott - TA, DW

Kendyl received her master's degree in Childhood Education and certification in Early Childhood from Manhattanville University, as well as a literacy degree from LIU. She brings experience from elementary classrooms and Academic Intervention Services from the Harrison Central School District and New Canaan Schools. She enjoys reading, golfing, and teaching!



Michael Priskie - Assistant Principal, MS/HS

Mr. Priskie earned a BA in Broadcast Journalism from Hofstra University and his TESOL certification from Lehman College. He taught ESL in NYC, then served as Dean of Students while pursuing his School Building Leadership license at Hunter College. He is a Jets fan and loves movies, music and spending time with his family.



New Staff continued

Christina Santini - TA, FEB

Christina attended Manhattanville College pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Childhood Education and Master's Degree in Literacy. She is most passionate about the field of literacy and providing students with the adequate skill sets needed to excel in our ever-changing world. Christina enjoys spending time with family, friends, and going on walks.



Alexandra Roviezzo - Elementary Teacher, FEB

Alexandra comes to us from 10 years of service with the NYC Department of Education. She received her Bachelors from SUNY New Paltz, Masters from Hunter College and a Masters from The College of Saint Rose. During the summers, she enjoys traveling, hiking and spending time with her family.



Yating Yang - Music Teacher Leave Replacement, MS/HS

Ms. Yang, an educator for over 15 years, holds music education degrees from Crane School of Music (BM) summa cum laude and Teachers College, Columbia University (MA). Her pre-college training includes Manhattan School of Music. Outside of the classroom, you can find her arranging music, studying music scores, or playing on the cello and the piano. She enjoys her dog's cool tricks and loves desserts.



Tenure Candidates

The Rye Neck School District is committed to recruiting and retaining excellent teachers. There are several mechanisms in place to ensure that our professional staff meets this goal, including ongoing feedback from the superintendent, principals, department supervisors, directors and chairs.

Each of these professionals brings a unique and important perspective to the process and works individually with nontenured teachers to foster professional development and provide support. These professional relationships help staff members reflect on their practice, grow and make appropriate adjustments.

From a formal perspective, district administrators utilize a comprehensive evaluation process, frequently observing and evaluating each new staff member to offer suggestions, monitor progress and assess improvement. A four-year probationary period is required before new teachers/administrators receive tenure and a three-year period for teachers who have previously held tenure in another public school district in New York State.

Parents can provide valuable insights and should do so, first to the staff member directly, since this feedback would be most helpful to him/her. Once parents have spoken to the teacher, they may also wish to share their thoughts with the individual building principal or supervisor.

Tenure recommendations are being considered for the following:

Teachers:

- Rosa Acocella-Ferrante
- Jessica Calvini
- Kelly Davey
- Ashley Eklund
- Cyndi Feinman
- Matthew Macias
- Ivan Martinez
- Kathleen Regan
- Erika Soderland
- Susan Soohoo

Teaching Assistants:

- Jennifer Bartlett
- Jill Becker
- Gertrude Gallin
- Theresa Michna
- Lisa Tansley-Jervis

Social Worker:

- Ana Crivorot

Administrator:

- H. Wil Siegel



From the PTSA

Ruth Homberg, PTSA President

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! The Rye Neck PTSA has been busy planning community events and enrichment opportunities for students at all 4 schools. Our goal is to provide more than \$100,000 in programming to Rye Neck students of all ages.

I asked a few members of our 12-person Executive Committee what they are looking forward to this year, and here's what they had to say:

Our big "Ribbons for Rye Neck" fundraiser is underway and we are excited for two new social events this fall: Parent's Night Out at Patsy's Pizzeria on September 26, and a Family Dance Night on December 12. Be on the lookout for new Rye Neck merchandise and ways to fundraise with DeCicco's, Box Tops, and Givebacks. - Kara Fox, VP of Fundraising

We have some exciting new After School Clubs on offer at the elementary schools, and we will bring back the Elementary School Theater Club in the spring. The amazing RNIC is busy planning Community Events and parent clubs. We have Author Visits in the works, and as always, we'll show our thanks to Rye Neck teachers and staff with treats throughout the year. -Kristen Lindberg, VP of Special Projects

I am working to bring presenters in to help support all parents, but especially those in the SEAC (Special Education Action Committee) community. This year's topics will include: helping your child develop a personal plan for a successful school year, parenting siblings who have different needs, aiding your child in positive social interactions, and helping support a child who may be bullied. - Jennifer Karlan, SEAC Committee Head

Daniel Warren has many activities planned for K-2! Everyone looks forward to the Rye Y Recess program, which ensures that every child has something to do during recess. We have a plethora of assemblies planned, including fan favorites Animal Embassies and the Chinese Cultural Center. We're also excited for community events such as our grade-wide play dates, the Halloween Costume Exchange and Walk/bike/scoot to school week. I love that there's a program for everyone. - Elizabeth Gillespie, VP of Daniel Warren

I am excited for the year ahead at F.E.B Bellows! We have many fun initiatives planned for our grade 3-5 students. We kicked off the year with the "Chalk the Walk" tradition, and in October we will have walk-to-school week and the annual Family Kickball Night. The YMCA coaches will continue to be available at recess time. Many fun STEAM presentations are planned, including an assembly about Ellis Island, and a mobile Sky Dome planetarium. Stay tuned for a new program for our 4th Graders! - Casey Glass, VP of F.E. Bellows

I am excited to get to know our new school principal, Mr. Doerr. I have also been working with the Middle School PTSA Committee Heads to plan fun events this school year, starting with our Welcome Back Snack, which is scheduled for September 6. We also have the Middle School Spooktacular on October 25th, and several STEAM programs in the works! -Jocelyn Langus, VP of Middle School

At the high school, our goal is to enrich our students' learning experience through speakers and workshops in literature, social and emotional health and wellness, engineering and more. We are building off the success of last year's STEAM programming, and will continue to fund both traditional grade-wide assemblies as well as smaller in-classroom speakers. Free dance classes are also in the works. -Jen Lindenbaum, VP of High School

We hope you'll help support these opportunities for the students of Rye Neck. Visit ryeneckptsa.org for more information on how you can donate and get involved!

Alumni Association News

Hope you all had an amazing summer! The Rye Neck Alumni Association is all about keeping our alumni connected to this incredible community and, even more importantly, bringing everyone together to give back. We've been busy all summer working to strengthen these connections.

This year is extra special for me—my daughter is about to become a Senior, and it's also my 30th high school reunion for the class of 1994! We're planning to celebrate by attending homecoming together, reminiscing about old memories at the school, and making some new ones.

Thanks to the continued generosity of our alumni and community, we're thrilled to award two Rye Neck graduating seniors with \$500 scholarships each. A big congratulations to Evan Janowitz and Hamza Abdalla, our 2023-2024 scholarship recipients—we wish them the best of luck in all their future endeavors!

The Alumni Association also offers campus tours for alumni and their graduating classes—just drop me an email if you're interested. And mark your calendars—our annual Softball Tournament fundraiser is coming up in June (date TBD). This event isn't just for alumni, so feel free to sign up and join in the fun!

We're always looking to grow and improve the Alumni Association, so if you have any suggestions or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out. Wishing you a fantastic school year ahead!

Visit our website, and if you have any questions or want to make a donation, just shoot us an email at alumni@ryeneck.org.

- Cindy Gutierrez-Fasolino Class of 1994



Donate Now!

News From the Athletic Department

The 2024 Fall sports season started on August 26th with over 250 excited athletes and 30 coaches getting preseason practices under way. The gymnasium, athletic fields and fitness center were filled with energy. Come out and cheer on our Panther teams and athletes.

Homecoming Weekend is September 27th & 28th. Mark your calendars now. The varsity home contest schedule is as follows:

Friday, September 27th

- Girls Tennis - 4:30 PM
- Girls Swimming - 4:30 PM @ Hommocks
- Girls Soccer - 4:45 PM
- Volleyball - 6:00 PM

Saturday, September 28th

- Field Hockey - 11:00 AM
- Cross Country - Bowdoin Park Invitational, 11:00 AM
- Boys Soccer - 12:30 PM
- Football - 3:00 PM

At halftime of the Homecoming football game, we will have two very special recognitions. Mr. Ryan Kochanowicz ('94), the latest Panther to be elected to the Rye Neck Athletic Hall of Fame, will be honored for his outstanding accomplishments on the soccer field and baseball diamond. We will also show our appreciation for Mrs. Julie Ianello, who is retiring from Rye Neck. Mrs. Ianello has been the backbone of the Athletic Department for over 20 years!

The latest Rye Neck athlete to make the commitment to continue their athletic career in college is senior three-sport standout, Shelby Preisser. Shelby will be playing softball at Haverford College. Congratulations, Shelby!

Follow Rye Neck Athletics on Twitter at @RNHSathletics

Thank you for your continued support of our athletic programs and go Rye Neck!



Rye Neck Booster Club

Greetings for the 2024-2025 school year! We are gearing up for an exciting year filled with community events, athletic contests, theater productions and PANTHER PRIDE! We can't wait to see the Rye Neck community back together again this fall!

The Booster Club's mission is to build school spirit by supporting athletics, theater and other initiatives at Rye Neck Schools. The organization at its core is about fostering community spirit. We hope that you will join us to support this mission!

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Show us your Panther Pride and support our efforts by joining the Booster Club for the school year. Membership fees support our programs, events, scholarships and spirit efforts. The cost to join the Booster Club: \$15 for a single membership; \$25 for a family; \$50 includes membership and a Rye Neck Lawn Sign; \$125 includes membership and lawn decorations for two days (blow up panther, Rye Neck feather flag and lawn signs). Join online through one of our email blasts or in-person at one of the Open House events held in September.

HOMECOMING – SEPTEMBER 27 & 28

Homecoming is a favorite time to show our Panther Pride! Save the Date for Homecoming events on Friday and Saturday! Come by the Athletic Fields to support your favorite team or find a new one! Check out the awesome Athlete's Village, visit our Spirit Wear pop up shop or enjoy a variety of activities sponsored by the Booster Club! This community-wide event brings out large crowds including Pre-K to alumni! Don't forget to wear your Panther colors!

FALL FEST FUNDRAISER – OCTOBER 19

Save the date for our annual parent's night out being held at Rye Grill & Bar in Rye, NY 7:30 pm – 10:30 pm. This beloved event is our primary fundraiser for the 2024-2025 school year programming so grab a friend and come out to show your Panther Pride!

The event sold out the last few years so be sure to register early. Tickets will be available mid-September!

FALL THEATRE PRODUCTION - NOVEMBER 14 & 15

Rye Neck theatre's production of "The Great Gatsby" is sure to be a rousing success! Let's pack the theater and show our favorite actors, crew members, musicians and directors how much they mean to our community!

PANTHER SPIRITWEAR

Gear up for the new school year with the latest Rye Neck Panthers Spiritwear. New gear will be available both online and at Homecoming this fall.

CONNECT WITH THE RYE NECK BOOSTER CLUB

Email Blasts: Receive Booster Club news, event information and sport updates.

Facebook & Instagram: Follow Rye Neck Booster Club on our Facebook Community page.

Website: Check out our club at Ryeneckboosterclub.com; Bookmark our website to stay up-to-date on all our happenings!

Please email any questions to RNBoosterclub@ryeneck.org

The Booster Club officers and our extended leadership team are looking forward to seeing you all out on the fields or at the shows this year.

President – Jen Abbey

Vice President – Rachel Felenstein

Secretary – Tanya Preisser

Treasurer – Laura Evangelista

Rye Neck School Foundation

Welcome Rye Neck families to the 2024-25 school year!

The mission of the RNSF is to provide financial support to the Rye Neck School District beyond what is covered by the district's annual operating budget. The RNSF accelerates excellence at our schools by funding state-of-the-art projects and initiatives that enhance the educational, artistic and athletic experiences of Rye Neck students.

Over the summer, the RNSF awarded the following three InstaGrants to Ellie Speros at Bellows, the Guidance Counseling Team at the Middle School and Principal Melinda Folchetti at the High School:

- Bellows - Schoolwide Store for Student Incentives - School store operated and managed by 5th grade students to teach real-world skills in inventory management, budgeting and customer service.
- Middle School - The Connections Corner - The Connections Corner is a supportive environment that is available during lunch to help facilitate connections and foster friendships among middle school students.
- High School - Cell Phone Initiative - The HS will employ zone indicators--laminated "traffic light" signage--for classrooms and other areas to manage high school cell phone usage.

We look forward to working with the Rye Neck administration, teachers and community in awarding more grants over the 2024-25 school year.

The inscribed Panther Pavers, which were sold last spring as part of our inaugural brick fundraiser, are now on display outside the entrance of the High School. Please stop by and find your brick next time you are on campus! We will be running the second annual brick fundraiser in the late spring, following our first two fundraising campaigns in November and March.

Thank you, in advance, for your support and assistance in making the RNSF a success. Please check our website (<https://www.ryeneckschoolfoundation.org>), and follow our Facebook and Instagram pages, to learn about our latest grants and upcoming campaigns. If you would like to volunteer with the RNSF, please email us at ryeneckschoolfoundation@gmail.com.

We look forward to a great school year!

President – Jennifer Soussa

Vice President – Jaime Santa

Treasurer – Debra Cunningham

Secretary/VP of Marketing – Arielle Diskin

Gold Card Club

Would you like to become a member of the Rye Neck Gold Card Club? The seniors in our community have long had a supporting role in our schools. The purpose of the Gold Card Club is to create closer ties between the schools and the community, using their social and historical knowledge of the Village of Mamaroneck and City of Rye. Members of the club have volunteered in our school libraries, supported our athletic and extracurricular events, and represented our schools in the community. In turn, they help represent the interests of seniors who live in our district and enjoy invitations to district events such as the annual Rye Neck High School musical. To join or learn more, please call Mrs. Mary Ellen Chiera in our district office at (914) 777-5200 or visit our website at www.ryeneck.org: look for the Community Partners page to see more.

Board of Education Meetings

Board meetings are televised on LMC-TV. LMC-TV will broadcast the meetings live on both cable (Channel 76 Cablevision and 35 Verizon) and the internet. Previous Board meetings can be viewed by visiting LMC-TV's website and selecting Watch on the top, then clicking Videos, By Category and then School Board Meetings. LMC-TV typically posts all Board meetings within two working days following the meeting. Meeting recordings are also posted on the Rye Neck website. All Board meeting agendas and minutes are available on BoardDocs.



Rye Neck Public Schools
Administration Building
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Mamaroneck, NY 10543

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Board of Education

Jason Carmel, President
Erica Wagner, Vice President
Gloria Golle, Trustee
Elizabeth Yong, Trustee
Nikki Barker, Trustee
Halli Gatenio, Trustee

Dear Rye Neck Resident

Administration: 914-777-5252

Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance
Corinne Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Welcome Back to School!

