



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING SESSION
JUNE 4, 2025**

Present: President Erica Wagner
Trustee Nikki Barker
Trustee Jason Carmel
Trustee Halli Gatenio
Trustee Gloria Golle
Trustee Elizabeth Yong
Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent of Schools
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Corrine Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Melinda Folchetti, Interim High School Principal
Jason Doerr, Middle School Principal
H. William Siegal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

I. Adjournment of Executive Session, Opening of Public Meeting

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Yong and seconded by Trustee Barker, it was

RESOLVED, that the executive session be adjourned and the Public Meeting be opened.

AYES: All Present
NAYES: None

II. Opening of Meeting

President Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

III. Approval of the Minutes of the May 20, 2025 Board of Education Meeting, May 22, 2025 Annual Meeting and Election of District, and May 22, 2025 Special Board of Education Meeting

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Golle and seconded by Trustee Gatenio, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the Minutes of the May 20, 2025 Board of Education Meeting.

AYES: All Present
NAYES: None

IV. Acceptance of Rye Neck School Foundation Grants

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Carmel and seconded by Trustee Gatenio, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District hereby accept the Rye Neck School Foundation Grants to the Rye Neck Schools, as per the attached letter and chart.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

V. Discussion

Cell Phone Ban

Ms. Folchetti advised the Board that the cell phone bell-to-bell ban in the High School will model the Middle School policy except that students may keep their internet-enabled devices in their lockers or backpacks/bags. She stated that all internet-enabled devices will be banned during the school day, 7:50 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., while students are on school grounds. The exceptions to the law are when the use of a cell phone is authorized by a teacher or the school district for a specific educational purpose; when necessary for management of a student's healthcare; in the event of an emergency; for translation services; and where by required by law under an IEP or 504 plan.

With regard to enforcing the ban, Ms. Folchetti explained that the High School will have a "soft opening" during the first two weeks of school where teachers and staff will implement and reinforce the new policy. They will provide verbal reminders and have grade level town hall meetings. After a first offence, students will be given an official warning, which will be documented for monitoring and data purposes. After a second offence, the student's phones will be placed in a pouch provided by the teacher and it will be given to an administrator or designee until the end of the school day. After a third offence, the student's phone will be placed in a pouch, given to an administrator or designee until the end of the school day and will have to be picked up by a parent/guardian from the High School main office. After a fourth offence, the student's phones will be placed in a pouch and given to an administrator everyday for 5 school days, and there will be a conference with the parent/guardian. During the school day, if students need to make a phone call to a parent/guardian, they are permitted to use the phone in the main office or guidance suite. Following discussion it was agreed that the consequences would not be listed in the formal policy.

Finally, Ms. Folchetti reported that, to prepare for the ban which begins next school year, administrators are visiting all the High School classes and working with the student/principal advisory groups to coordinate a "Phone Out" on June 6th. There will be a QFT with Middle/High School faculty on May 21st and grade level town halls in September. In addition, the administrators will work with faculty to develop a school district/board policy by August 1st. They will review data from the first semester in January 2026.

School Climate

Dr. Lutinski explained that school climate is how people feel about the social, educational and safety environment at school. He stated that it's a multi-layered approach to implement a positive school environment. Mr. Doerr stated that they started the year by

making sure everyone felt heard through parent coffees, a parent feedback link in principals' newsletters, and the creation of student advisory panels. To support the social/emotional well being of students, the counseling staff opened up the Panther's Den in the library. It's a place for students to go during their lunch period if they need a break from the dining hall. There are planned school spirit events, they celebrate student successes, provide character education, hold assemblies, and support the DARE program. At the beginning of each year they educate students on the DASA rules and Code of Conduct, and make sure they know who they can go to to report problems.

Dr. Lutinski reported that the District will be using the anonymous reporting system for life safety events offered through Sandy Hook Promise. Staff will begin training next year.

Finally, Mr. Siegel advised that he created a wellness screener for students in grades 6-12 to identify student needs and help those that need it. Over 700 students participated in the screener which identified some students that needed help. They will continue the screener moving forward and will follow through with a level of care.

Strategic Plan Update

Mrs. Ryan reported on the progress for each of the three goals of the Strategic Plan.

With regard to Goal #1, staff who participated in QFT coursework last year trained the entire staff this year. Teachers used the early release days to learn the QFT technique and then implemented it in their classrooms. Each teacher will have implemented a dream project by the end of this year, and High School students completed Capstone projects. Staff members participated in various trainings this year and will share their experiences with the rest of the staff next year.

With regard to Goal #2, the District administered a screening to students in grades 6-12. The SEL curriculum was inventoried and assessed. Wellness days for next year have been mapped out and teachers have begun planning lessons for next year. A wellness presentation was provided by Mr. Siegel and a library of resources has been created and will continue to be supplemented moving forward.

With regard to Goal #3, some of the staff has been trained and is utilizing Frontline to organize and catalog the professional opportunities for staff. An intervisitation structure for staff has been created and implemented, and the first round of Professional Learning Communities has been successfully piloted. Various opportunities for staff moving forward have been mapped out.

Next, Mrs. Ryan advised that many of the dream projects have been photographed in order to create a montage that can be shared with the community. This summer they will create a dedicated update to the community about the Strategic Plan. Mrs. Ryan is leading focus groups to assess how staff feels about the implementation of the plan.

Finally, Mrs. Ryan stated that this summer a survey will be sent out to the community in order to create an inventory of interests and expertise with the goal of compiling a list of resources that can be used in our schools. They will be looking at more stipended positions for curriculum leaders, and will be looking to design the next phase of the

Strategic Plan since the current action plans and steps should be completed by December 31, 2025.

Facilities Committee Update

Mrs. Mahar presented an update on the Athletic Field Feasibility Study. She stated that the community voted to approve the use of \$2.7 million of the balance in the 2022 Capital Reserve Fund and approximately \$40,000 was to be used for an athletic field study to assess the currency layout of the fields at the Middle/High School campus. In the summer of 2024, the District contracted with LAN Associates to perform the study.

Mrs. Mahar then explained why the study is needed. Since the fields are natural grass, sometimes the home games have to be moved to other locations, postponed, cancelled or rescheduled if the fields are too wet. Section 1 is entertaining starting the fall and spring seasons earlier, which gives the fields less time to rest and grow grass. Rye Neck is currently one of only two Section 1 districts with no turf facilities. The current field conditions include worn out/bare spots and disproportionate grass growth.

She then reviewed the best layout option for the facility. It includes 2 multipurpose synthetic turf fields, a 6 lane track, grandstand and press box, field lighting, a concession stand and storage building, existing baseball and softball fields and tennis courts, a parking lot, a stormwater pond and retaining wall. The flood risk report helped inform the layout.

Mrs. Mahar advised that the next steps would be a geotechnical and wetlands investigation, architectural design and cost estimating.

2025-26 Board Committee/Liaisons

The Board reviewed the current list of committees and liaisons for each and discussed which committees/teams are needed for next year and how many board members need to be on each. It was decided that the DEI team is no longer needed; the BOCES Board, NYSSBA and West-Put Board should be combined and only one trustee liaison; and the RNSF will be combined into a Community Partners team with the PTSA, Booster Club, and Alumni Association, and community affairs, and there will be 2 trustee liaisons.

VI. Policy Committee Update

Trustees Barker and Yong reviewed with the Board revisions to Policy 5695 - Students and Personal Electronic Devices.

The following policies were recommended for a first reading at the June 17th Board meeting:

Policy 4511 - Textbook Selection and Adoption
Policy 5100 & 5100-R - Student Attendance and Regulation
Policy 5710 - School Safety and Education (SSEC) Reporting

In addition, they explained that policies that have already been deleted through NYSSBA's comprehensive policy review will need to be put up for a first reading on June 17th.

Finally, they reviewed suggested changes to the Audit Committee Charter regarding length of terms members can serve, and discussed whether or not these changes should be made in the other committee charters.

VII. Adjournment of Meeting

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Golle and seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, that there being no further business before the Board that the Board of Education Planning Session of June 4, 2025 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

President Wagner adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Chiera
District Clerk