BOE Meeting, August 25, 2025 **Superintendent's Remarks**

I am thrilled to welcome the entire Rye Neck school community back for the 2025-2026 school year. It's been an extremely busy summer, with final preparations underway for the return of our students. Over the last two months, our administrators have been coordinating schedules and communications and our clerical staff preparing welcome back messages and activities. I especially want to thank and recognize our maintenance and custodial staff who not only did a magnificent job getting our facilities ready, but also coordinated and supported the Rye Y while we enjoyed hosting their eight-week summer camp.

As always, the summer is the ideal time for big projects. We completed masonry, renovation and restoration at Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows, repaving at F.E. Bellows, as well as the construction of our high school security vestibule. We are also very excited for our new enclosed lighting and sound booth in our HS/MS auditorium.

Staffing is a key activity every new year, and by the first day of school we will have addressed 10 vacancies, including a new district security officer, monitors, teaching assistants and teachers. We will welcome all of them at our new staff orientation today with our veteran staff returning on August 26th for a full three days to prepare for our students to arrive on September 2nd. Of course our Athletic Department has already begun the year, with 225 varsity and JV fall sport athletes, and an additional 125 modified athletes practicing with 33 coaches. Thanks to our nursing staff for clearing all those registrations! We are eagerly anticipating the installation of our brand new soccer/baseball and field hockey/softball scoreboards this coming week. A big thank you to the Rye Neck School Foundation for their generous donation.

Last year, we announced our transition to ParentSquare, a communications platform that will help us keep you better informed and more connected to our school community. We're excited to share that we have spent the spring and summer, including this week's staff conference days, getting our

teachers trained in ParentSquare. Starting this school year, you'll receive all district, school, grade-level and and classroom communications in one place and translated into your preferred language, whether by email, text, app, or web. Through ParentSquare, you'll be able to:

- Stay up to date on news and events
- Send and receive messages with teachers and staff
- Fill out forms and permission slips
- Sign up for conferences and volunteer opportunities
- View calendar items and photos from your school

To get the most out of ParentSquare, we encourage you to download the free mobile app, available for iOS and Android.

Our Cell Phone policy goes live for the start of the school year. Students are reminded that cell phones must be turned off and out of sight for the entirety of the school day per New York State Law. Please refer to our district-wide communication sent earlier this month as an update. And I thank our high school principal Ms. Melinda Folchetti and all the students who volunteered for our "no cell phone" trial in June.

I will be enhancing our communication with videos entitled "Superintendent's Spotlight." They are posted on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, so please follow our school accounts to receive immediate notifications. All the information mentioned today was posted last week on those platforms.

My Year 1 Entry Plan will be posted on the district website today. I will be learning and reviewing the school district's policies and procedures across five different categories: Instruction & Program, Finance, Governance, Operations and Personnel. I look forward to gathering more information and providing opportunities for feedback from all the stakeholders in our district including students, staff, parents, and community members.

The major initiative for our school year is the second phase of our Rye Neck Strategic Plan. We are continuing our relationship with consultant Judy Wilson as we expand on our three key goals:

- Equip all learners to approach problems by asking questions, exploring solutions, taking action, and reflecting on outcomes
- Build transformative environments that foster empathy, compassion, and connection to the world. Create learning experiences that instill a sense of purpose inside and outside of the classroom
- Design systems for our professional learning community to develop practices and expertise that lead to transformational experiences for themselves and their students

We will provide detailed information on the status of Year 2 of our goals throughout the year.

Thank you again to everyone for such a warm welcome and I am thrilled to see our children return on September 2nd.