BOE Meeting, September 17, 2025 Superintendent's Remarks

The school year is off and running here at Rye Neck with a strong start to the academic calendar. I have enjoyed both our High School and Middle School Open Houses, meeting parents, and having the opportunity to showcase our classrooms. I look forward to the FE Bellows Open house tomorrow night and Daniel Warren Open House next Thursday.

Our Assistant Superintendent for Business, Carolyn Mahar, provided a comprehensive presentation of the summer capital projects at our last planning session on Wednesday, September 3rd, a copy of which is posted on the district website. I do want to thank Mrs. Mahar for her leadership in those projects, which are projected to finish under budget by over $100,000.

Thank you to our Director of Technology and Communications, Mary Lanza, for offering free ParentSquare training sessions during our Open Houses. If you have not joined us on ParentSquare, we encourage you to download the free mobile app, available for iOS and Android. It is the one-stop option for all our communications. I also want to recognize Ms. Lanza for her persistence in educating our students and community about being vigilant on phishing campaigns. We had multiple students report suspicious emails to Ms. Lanza, which is critical to maintain our online security. While a frustrating part of having an online presence, Rye Neck is in a great place because of her passion for educating our students.

Our implementation of the state Cell Phone policy has been very successful so far, and I thank Ms. Folchetti, Mr. Priskie, Mr. Doerr, and our students and staff for a very smooth transition. I welcome our student representative, Spencer Elliot, to the Board and look forward to his thoughts on the policy. I also thank Spencer for attending the Westchester BOCES workshop with fellow ex officios from the area. I attended the second meeting and enjoyed interacting with other superintendents, board members and the student representative from Pleasantville, which provides

a nice Rye Neck connection. It is great to have the student voices represented at our meetings.

I look forward to my meeting tomorrow with State Senator Shelley Mayer. I reached out to Senator Mayer after a decision was made on August 29 that directly affected the Rye Neck School District. On that date, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) notified all state education agencies that it had formally discontinued the national Blue Ribbon Schools program effective immediately. This decision came without consultation with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) prior to the announcement. The timing of this announcement coincided with the news that Rye Neck High School would have, in fact, received the Blue Ribbon acknowledgement for the first time since 1996. To cancel this program, at the end of the review cycle, without any recognition for the schools that competed in the process throughout the school year (including research, essays, and multiple submissions of insight) is an academic injustice. I believe strongly that Rye Neck should still celebrate this prestigious achievement, since Ms. Folchetti was able to receive direct confirmation from the Blue Ribbon committee that Rye Neck would have indeed been honored. I'm hopeful to collaborate with Senator Mayer on a way to get a formal recognition from NYSED for our district regarding this honor. I congratulate Ms. Fochetti, the high school staff, students and entire Rye Neck community on this incredible accomplishment.

I look forward to my three upcoming Coffee & Conversation opportunities with the Rye Neck community. They are all Monday nights at 6:00 pm, with Daniel Warren scheduled for September 29, FE Bellows on October 27 and MS/HS on December 1st. I will provide a short 15-minute presentation on educational topics, before opening up the floor to general discussions. There will also be time at the end for 1-on-1 conversations as well. The goal is to hear feedback on what we do well, and what growth areas or new ideas you have for our district.

I wish all of our Rye Neck students and families well, especially those who celebrate the upcoming holidays, and look forward to seeing you at our upcoming school and extracurricular events.