



Discovery

GREAT NECK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EMPOWERING STUDENT VOICE

At the Great Neck Public Schools, student perspectives don't just matter — they help shape the conversation. For 50 years, the district has been a leader in encouraging student participation in Board of Education meetings through the Student Delegates program. This year, student voice has been amplified with the introduction of the district's first ex officio student Board members.

“Student input is essential to understanding how policies and programs impact those we serve most: our students,” Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Bossert said. “The Board of Education values this exchange and the insight these young leaders bring to our discussions.”

The district established its Student Delegates program in 1975, decades before New York State required student representation on school boards in 2005. Student delegates represent the district's secondary schools and regularly report on school happenings during Board meetings. They can also

bring forward student perspectives on educational issues and help ensure that communication flows both ways between the classroom and the Board table.

South High senior Katie Leder and North High senior Maxwell Pour have been selected to serve alongside elected Board trustees for the 2025–26 school year. While ex officio student members cannot vote or participate in nonpublic meetings, their presence at the dais during Board meetings ensures that students literally have “a seat at the table.”

The creation of ex officio student positions is encouraged by New York State as a way for students to gain firsthand experience with the decision-making process and learn the importance of civic engagement, collaboration and leadership, skills that extend well beyond their school years.

By empowering student voice, the Great Neck Public Schools affirms a simple but powerful belief: When students are part of the conversation, everyone benefits.



This year's 2025–26 student delegates were formally introduced to the community at the October Board meeting:

North Middle: Samuel Noah Kaya, Joseph Lahijani and Jingxin Rui

South Middle: Dov Adda, Winston Chen and Yutong Xing

North High: Vivienne Ahdoot, Letizia Kaya and Lielle Ostad

South High: Dalia Castilho, Alivia Chen, Dhruvi Kumar and Cassandra Zheng

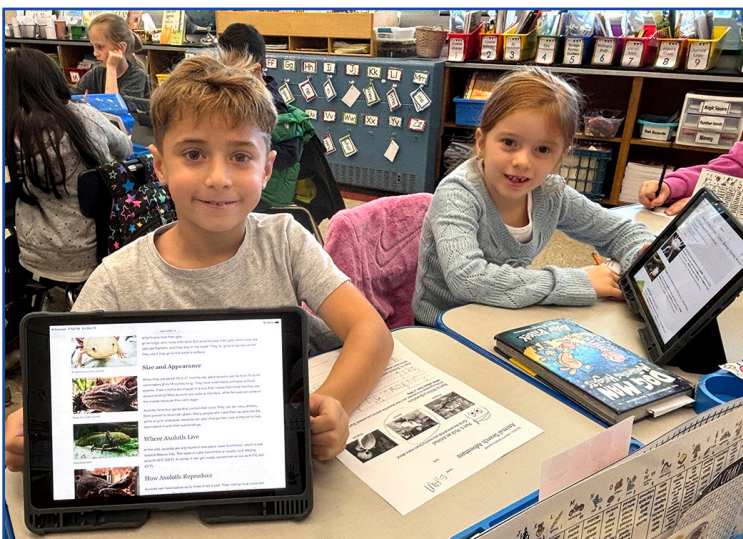
Village School: Gwendolyn Hart



South High senior Katie Leder (second from right) and North High senior Maxwell Pour (far left) have been selected to serve as ex officio student members for the 2025–26 school year alongside elected Board trustees Grant Toch, Joanne Chan, Steve Chen, Donna Peirez and Rebecca Sassouni, pictured here with Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Bossert.

John F. Kennedy and Saddle Rock Elementary Schools Designated as Apple Distinguished Schools

Recognized for **innovation, leadership** and **educational excellence** using technology



The district is pleased to share that two elementary schools have been recognized as Apple Distinguished Schools for the 2025–2028 program term. John F. Kennedy Elementary School and Saddle Rock Elementary School have earned this distinction based on their commitment to continuous innovation in education and using Apple products to inspire, imagine and impact teaching and learning.

District and building leaders praised staff, students and the school community on this recognition, which reflects the district’s commitment to leveraging technology as a key component of innovative learning and student success.

“At JFK, we want our students to leave our school feeling confident as problem-solvers, collaborators and creators,” Principal Ron Gimondo said. “By integrating technology thoughtfully, we are not just preparing our students for future careers — we are preparing students to shape the future.”

“Saddle Rock students and staff live by our guiding rules for living, which are values that inspire us to create a joyful, inclusive, innovative place to learn and grow,” Principal Luci Bradley explained. “We are honored to be recognized for the creative ways our school uses technology to support student discovery and digital citizenship.”

Apple Distinguished Schools are centers of leadership and educational excellence, with a clear vision for how technology-rich environments support learning goals. In Apple Distinguished Schools, forward-thinking leaders and their communities work to inspire, imagine and impact teaching and learning, and they have documented results of academic accomplishments.

The Great Neck Public Schools is proud to have three elementary schools honored as Apple Distinguished Schools. John F. Kennedy and Saddle Rock join E.M. Baker Elementary School, which has been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for the 2024–2027 program term.



Distinguished School

National Merit Scholarship Program Honors 104 Students

2026 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists

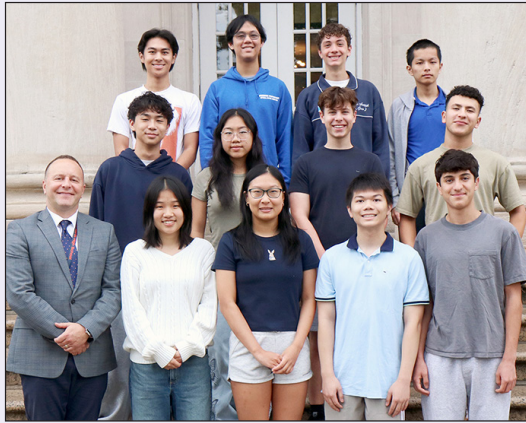
Thirty-five students throughout the district have been announced as Semifinalists in the prestigious 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program.

These Semifinalists are among 16,000 nationwide, having scored among the highest in New York State on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which they took last year. Semifinalists represent less than 1% of seniors in the country.

The district extends its best wishes as these students advance in the competition for National Merit Scholarship awards.

North High School

Jessica Cao
Jinkuan Chen
Serena Chen
Aiden Jin
Daniel Kardos
Ethan Lam
Sophia Li
Alex Lu
Michael Lyakhov
Tomi Shamash
Kian Soleymani
Harrison Yu



South High School

Dalia Castilho	Sarah Joseph	Victoria Wang
Ryan Cheung	Marcus Lee	Jonathan Wu
Khloe Chong	Madeleine Lennox	Chloe Yim
Sydney Dong	Aaron Liu	Cynthia Zhang
Olivia Gu	Xiao Ma	Raymond Zhang
Elaine He	Lana Miao	Emily Zhao
Aidan Hong	Xingchen Ming	Tristan Zhuo
Enoch Huang	Addie Suggs	



2026 National Merit Commended Students

In addition to the district's 35 Semifinalists, 69 seniors have been named Commended Students in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program. These students placed among the top 50,000 of the more than 1.5 million students nationwide who took the PSAT/NMSQT in their junior year. Each honoree received a Letter of Commendation in recognition of exceptional academic promise.

Although Commended Students do not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships, some become candidates for scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.

North High School

Alexander Baluyut	Julian Elihu	Max Mueller
Nathaniel Bina	William Gao	An Ping
Alex Chen	Alvin Li	Maggie Xiao
Michelle Cheng	Kayden Li	Noah Yousefzadeh

South High School

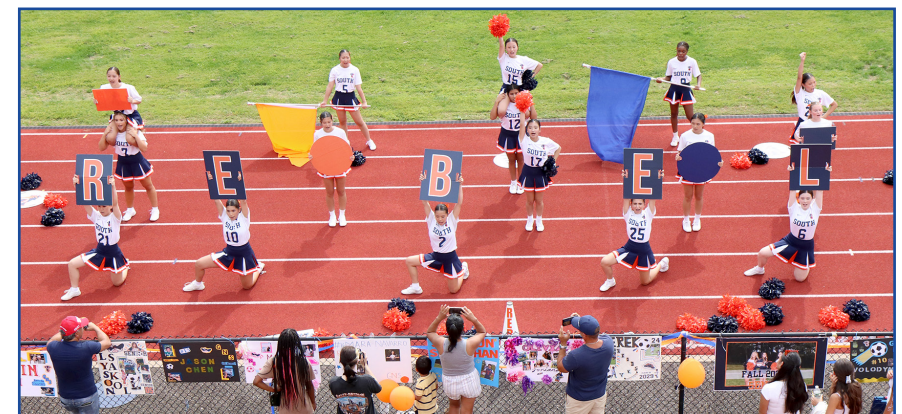
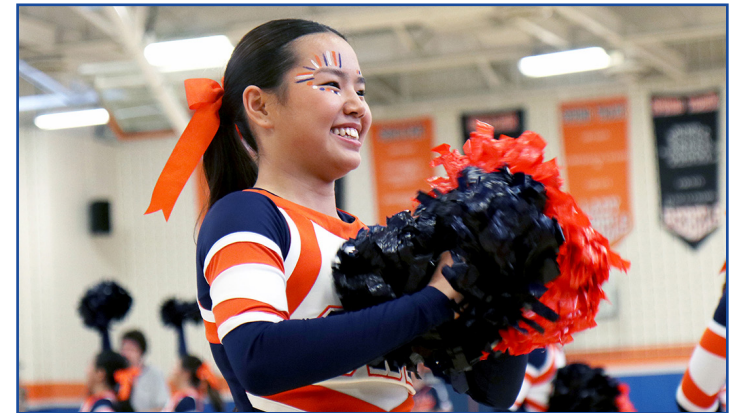
Botond Acosta	Nandini Khaneja	Joy Pyun
Noah An	Aaron Kim	Pericles Sgantzos
Abigail Badalov	Alice Kim	Claire Shang
Kyra Capodanno	Enoch Kim	Jinxian Elaine Su
Alexander Chang	Kylie Lam	Jessica Tamari
Joshua Chang	Rachel Lee	Tristan Wang
Hannah Cheng	Jaden Li	Samantha Wong
Katherine Cheung	Jerry Li	Albert Wu
Benson Chou	Shichen Liu	Andy Wu
Ashley Chung	Thomas Liu	Julia Xu
Stefan Cutler	Alexander Lo	Yuhao Xu
Zaahid Desai	Brendan Lo	Sidney Yeung
Emma Ding	Meera Mandrekar	Sean You
Trinity Guan	Ethan Moy	Mofan Yu
Justina Hom	Ashley Nguyen	Marco Zhan
Joanna Huang	He Ni	Ellen Zhang
Jake Jagoda	Chloe Ning	Edward Zhao
Winnifred Jiang	Jeremy Oak	Marvin Zhong
Alexandra Keilbach	Arnav Pemmaraju	Yu Zhu

2025 Homecoming: A Celebration of Community Spirit

North High School



South High School



South High School Named NYSPHSAA School of Distinction

For the third consecutive year, South High School has been honored by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) as a recipient of the 2024–25 School of Distinction Award. This honor requires that 100% of a school’s varsity teams qualify for the Scholar-Athlete Team award during their respective season. A total of 110 schools across New York State earned the School of Distinction Award for the 2024–25 school year.



(Left to right) South High Assistant Principals Adam Hopkins and Michael DiPasquale, South High Athletic Director Mitch Braun, South High Principal Thomas DePaola and GNPS Director of Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics David Zawaton.

Musicians Selected for All-State Ensembles

Fourteen highly talented musicians from North High School and South High School have been selected for the prestigious and very competitive 2025 New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Conference, to be held Dec. 4–7 in Rochester, New York. In addition, seven students have been named as alternates for the event.

North High All-State Musicians

Alexander Baluyut – trombone, Symphony Orchestra
Nina Bikhman – alto I, Mixed Chorus
Lana Goldsmith – soprano I, Treble Chorus and
jazz soprano, Vocal Jazz Ensemble
Ye-On Lee – clarinet, Symphonic Band
Taj Malhotra – bass I, Mixed Chorus
Lindsay Stoller – soprano II, Treble Chorus

Alternates

Harrison Albin – bass I
Abigail Bernstein – jazz trombone
Regina Cho – violin
Ethan Lam – violin
Tomi Shamash – French horn

South High All-State Musicians

Maisyn Cardinale – alto II, Mixed Chorus
Joanna Huan – violin, Symphony Orchestra
David Kagan – bass II, Mixed Chorus
Cedric Lai – violin, String Orchestra
Jinxian Elaine Su – viola, String Orchestra
Shenglin Tang – violin, String Orchestra
Sophia Wu – flute, Wind Ensemble
Ashley Zheng – viola, Symphony Orchestra

Alternates

Avery Chen – violin
Kaitlin Qu – violin



North High musicians are taught by Dr. Pamela Levy, fine and performing arts department head/vocal music teacher; Dr. Esther Noh, instrumental music teacher; and Rosario Fuschetto, instrumental music teacher.



South High musicians are taught by Michael Schwartz, performing arts department head/instrumental music teacher; Mark Boschen, instrumental music teacher; and Dr. Janine Robinson, vocal music teacher.

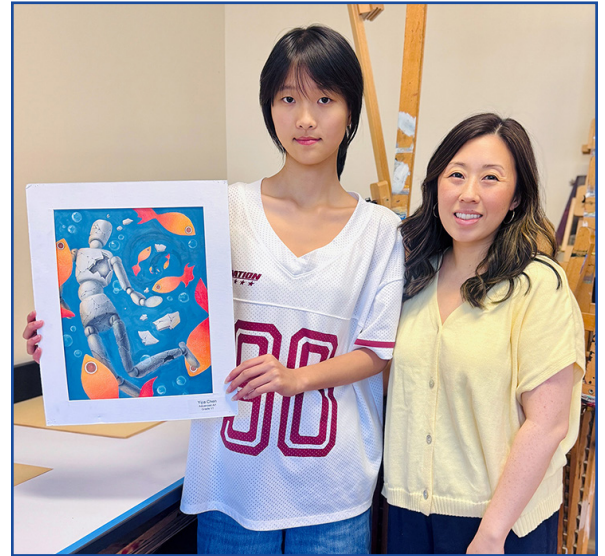
North High Senior Receives Long Island Scholar-Artist Award

North High School senior Yijia Chen is the recipient of a Merit Award for Visual Arts through the 2026 Long Island Scholar-Artist Awards program, sponsored by the Long Island Arts Alliance (LIAA).

Each year, the Long Island Arts Alliance honors a select group of exceptionally accomplished high school seniors for their outstanding achievements across five disciplines: visual arts, music, theater, dance and media arts.

Selections are made from a pool of students nominated by Long Island's public school districts, and independent and parochial schools. From these nominees, the Scholar-Artist selection committee chooses 20 Award of Distinction recipients and 20 Award of Merit recipients. All honorees are recognized at a year-end LIAA recognition event.

The LIAA Scholar-Artist program is endorsed by the New York State School Music Association, the New York State Art Teachers Association, the Nassau and Suffolk chapters of the New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education, and the Nassau and Suffolk art supervisors associations.



Long Island Scholar-Artist Merit Award recipient Yijia Chen is pictured with North High art teacher Emily Man.

Two Musicians to Perform in NYSSMA Piano Showcase



South High ninth grader Leeann Lee is congratulated by Michael Schwartz, performing arts department head/instrumental music teacher.



North High senior Michelle Cheng is congratulated by instrumental music teacher Dr. Esther Noh.

The district is also proud to highlight that two talented pianists have been selected to perform in the highly competitive New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Piano Showcase, part of the 2025 All-State Winter Conference. Congratulations to North High School senior Michelle Cheng and South High School freshman Leann Lee.

There were 127 applicants for this year's showcase and only 11 musicians were chosen for this prestigious honor. In addition to audition tapes and applications, Michelle and Leann were also nominated by their respective music teachers, who wrote letters of recommendation on their behalf.

The NYSSMA All-State Winter Conference, which will be held from Dec. 4–7 in Rochester, New York, features various performances by the state's finest student-musicians as individuals and in ensembles. The Piano Showcase will take place on Friday, Dec. 5.



GREAT NECK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

345 Lakeville Road • Great Neck, NY 11020
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Rebecca Sassouni, *Trustee*
Katie Leder, *Ex Officio Student Member*
Maxwell Pour, *Ex Officio Student Member*

Superintendent of Schools

Kenneth R. Bossert, Ed.D.

Follow us!



Mission Statement
The Great Neck Public School District provides an innovative and collaborative educational environment that supports academic excellence and the social and emotional growth of all students so that they may become lifelong learners and compassionate, productive members of a diverse, global society.

For information about REGISTERING A CHILD FOR SCHOOL:

www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/registration | residency@greatneck.k12.ny.us
(516) 441-4080



Kindergarten Online Registration Opens Dec. 1, 2025

Online kindergarten registration for the 2026–27 school year will open on Dec. 1, 2025. Any child who legally resides in the school district and will be 5 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2026, is eligible to register. All children who will attend kindergarten at a public or private school must register with the school district. Note: Students who currently attend the district's UPK program at the John F. Kennedy School, Parkville School, or Community School do not need to re-register; parents of these students only need to complete a new kindergarten application.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Online Registration Opens Jan. 5, 2026

Online registration for the district's Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program opens on Jan. 5, 2026. Any child who legally resides in the school district and will be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2026, is eligible for admission to the 2026–27 UPK half-day program. Only applications submitted online and completed by Jan. 30 will be considered if a lottery is needed for placement in an a.m. or p.m. class. Mandatory in-person appointments will be scheduled from Feb. 2–13 to finalize Early Registration. UPK is offered to district residents at no cost; a supplemental half-day, tuition-based enrichment program called Fun for Fours is also available with limited enrollment.