Vol. 47-1 – Summer 2025

Discovery

GREAT NECK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BY KENNETH R. BOSSERT, ED.D.

As we close the books on another outstanding school year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our students, families, faculty and staff for their unwavering commitment to excellence. We had many opportunities to celebrate our students and staff this spring, from joyful traditions to award ceremonies, all leading up to our commencement exercises in June.

We congratulate our graduates in the Class of 2025 and wish them well on the next step of their journey. As I told our seniors in my commencement address: No *GPS* will chart the course of your future perfectly, but your foundation in *GNPS* will surely take you as far as you wish to go.

Speaking of direction…One of the district's many accomplishments this past school year was our successful creation of the Portrait of a Great Neck Graduate. We partnered with Molloy University in a yearlong effort to develop a framework outlining the specific skills, mindsets, and traits that our unique school community expects of our graduates. The final outcome — included on the back page of this newsletter — represents the collective community vision to ensure our students are successful in life, no matter which path they pursue after high school graduation. Thank you to everyone who participated in this effort.

We are proud of all that our students have accomplished, both in and out of the classroom. Their dedication, curiosity and resilience continue to inspire us. I also want to recognize our educators and staff for the passion and professionalism they bring to their work each day, and our families for the vital role they play in supporting our schools.

I hope everyone is enjoying these summer months and taking time to rest, recharge, and enjoy moments with family and friends. Whether you're traveling, reading, exploring new interests, or simply relaxing, I hope this season brings you joy and renewal.

We look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday, September 2, for what promises to be another exceptional year of learning and growth.

Follow Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Bossert on Instagram!

dr.bossert_great_neck_super
Ken Bossert

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS
FOR 2025-2026

The Board of Education has adopted the following meeting schedule for the 2025–2026 school year. All meetings will take place in the E.M. Baker School auditorium starting at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change. For the most current meeting information, please visit the district's website at www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/meetings.

Thursday, August 28, 2025 – 7 p.m. at Phipps
Wednesday, September 17, 2025
Thursday, October 16, 2025
Wednesday, November 12, 2025
Wednesday, December 10, 2025
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Tuesday, January 27, 2026*
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Wednesday, February 25, 2026*
Wednesday, March 11, 2026
Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Tuesday, May 5, 2026
Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 10 p.m. at Phipps
Wednesday, June 3, 2026
Wednesday, June 17, 2026

** - indicates a snow date, if needed*

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT
BY GRANT TOCH

As we enjoy the summer season, I want to take a brief moment to reflect on the many accomplishments of the past school year and share our continued commitment to the success of our students and schools.

This past June, we proudly celebrated the GNPS Class of 2025 – a remarkable group of students whose achievements, resilience, and character represent the very best of our school community. The entire Board of Education was on hand at all three high school commencement ceremonies to applaud our graduates and wish them every success as they begin this exciting next chapter.

Although summer brings a well-earned pause from the school routine, our Board remains hard at work. On July 8, we held our annual reorganizational meeting and began preparing in earnest for the year ahead. As we look toward the 2025–2026 school year, we remain focused on maintaining the high standards of excellence our community expects and deserves.

As a Board, we are grateful for the trust and support of this extraordinary community. We are committed to maintaining our district's tradition of greatness and ensuring that all staff feel supported and all students continue to thrive.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer. On behalf of my fellow Board Trustees, we look forward to welcoming everyone back to school in September.

District Welcomes **NEW ADMINISTRATORS**

The district is pleased to welcome three new administrators who officially began their roles on July 1, marking the start of the 2025–2026 school year.

Corey McNamara, North High Principal

Corey McNamara has joined the district as principal of John L. Miller-Great Neck North High School. He comes to Great Neck from the Elwood School District, where he served since 2018 as building administrator at John H. Glenn High School, winner of the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence award. His tenure included four years as an assistant principal and most recently three years as building principal.

McNamara earned a Bachelor of Science in physical education from LIU Post, as well as a Master of Science in health education and a school building and district certification from Hofstra University.

Thomas DePaola, South High Principal

Thomas DePaola, who served as an acting assistant principal at William A. Shine-Great Neck South High School from August 2024 through February 2025, has returned to the halls of South High in a permanent capacity as principal for the upcoming school year.

DePaola, a veteran school administrator whose career includes 12 years as principal of Carle Place Middle and High School, built a strong rapport with faculty and students alike during his time at South High.

DePaola earned a Bachelor of Science in biology from Siena College, a Master of Science in teaching biology from University at Binghamton, and a Master in Science in educational leadership and administration from The College of Saint Rose.

William Corrao, North Middle Assistant Principal

William Corrao has joined the North Middle School administrative team following Nancy Gunning's retirement this summer. Corrao comes from Three Village School District, where he served as a middle school assistant principal and high school assistant principal for three years. Members of the GNPS community may recognize him from his five years as an English teacher at Great Neck North High School (2017–22).

Corrao received his Bachelor of Arts in English from St. John's University. He earned his Master of Arts in secondary education and advanced certificates in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), school building leadership and school district leadership from Adelphi University.

REORGANIZATIONAL Meeting

The Great Neck Board of Education held its annual reorganizational meeting on July 8. Donna Peirez, reelected in May, was sworn in for her fourth consecutive three-year term as trustee. Grant Toch was reelected president for a second year, and Joanne Chan was named vice president for the 2025–2026 school year, marking her first term in the role. Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Bossert also took the oath of office, and Stacey Pedone was reappointed as district treasurer.

Great Neck Schools Celebrate th

John L. Miller-Great Neck North High School

William A. Shine-Great Neck South High School

ne Class of 2025

Congratulations to the Class of 2025 on marking an exciting milestone in front of friends, family, faculty and administrators. The commencement ceremonies marked the culmination of years of dedication and academic growth.

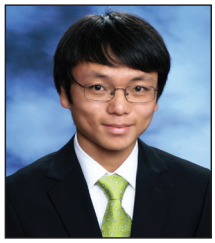
The Village School

Adult Learning Center

Top of the Class

The Great Neck Public Schools celebrated 651 graduates from the district's three high schools: 321 from John L. Miller-Great Neck North High School, 308 from William A. Shine-Great Neck South High School, and 22 from Village School. A look at the valedictorians and salutatorians for North and South high schools follows.

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN



Isaac Xu is a National Merit Scholarship finalist and an AP Scholar with Distinction. He was a four-year member of the North High Math Team and served as an officer during his senior year.

Xu is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America, earning the highest rank of Eagle Scout during his senior year. He has served in leadership positions for Great Neck Troop 10, including Senior Patrol Leader and Troop Quartermaster. Through his work with the Boy Scouts, Xu has volunteered countless hours for various service activities throughout Great Neck and neighboring communities.

Xu will attend the University of Toronto.

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL SALUTATORIAN

Johnathan Ahdout is a National Merit Scholarship winner, AP Scholar with Distinction, Regeneron STS Scholar, Coca-Cola Scholarship semifinalist, and a U.S. Presidential Scholar finalist. He served as president and founding member of the Science Research Club, president of the Computer Science Club, co-president and captain of the Science Olympiad Team, co-captain of the Quiz Bowl Team, co-president of TV North Audio-Visual Club, editor-in-chief for the Online Sector of the school newspaper, and senior class speaker for the Student Council.

Ahdout was named a Scholar in the 2025 Regeneron Science Talent Search, the most prestigious math and science competition in the nation for high school seniors. He was a member of the North High science research program and conducted internships with several research facilities, including the Brown Lab and Center for Applied AI for Protein Dynamics at Vanderbilt University, Yazawa Lab at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine, and Horowitz Lab at University of Denver. He has presented research at regional competitions and conferences, and he co-authored a paper that was published in a scientific journal.

Ahdout will attend Princeton University.

SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN

Ruiqi Liu is a National Merit Scholarship winner and an AP Scholar with Distinction. He served as co-president of the Mathematics Club, co-president of Academic Outreach, co-vice president of Aylus Great Neck Branch, and a member of Key Club. He was a member of the Science Olympiad Team, participated in the South High science research program, and conducted research at the NYU Avalos Lab.

A talented flutist, Liu shared his musical talents as a member of the school's wind ensemble, symphony orchestra, pit orchestra for musicals and operas, and as a tutor in the Music Buddies program. He was inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society as a freshman and was selected for several honors ensembles throughout his high school career, including the All-State Wind Ensemble, All-County Band, and New York School Band Director's Association (NYSBDA) Honor Band. He was also chosen to participate in the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College Program.

Liu will attend Northwestern University.

SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL SALUTATORIAN

Laura Zhang is a National Merit Scholarship winner, AP Scholar with Distinction, and National Latin Exam Gold Medalist. She served as captain of the Science Olympiad Team, treasurer of the Math Team, co-president of the National Science Bowl and Physics Club, and executive director of the Teen Hacks Long Island Hackathon. She was a four-year member of the varsity fencing team, which won multiple Nassau County and Long Island championships during her high school career.

Zhang was a member of the South High science research program and conducted research through the Stony Brook Geosystems Engineering Lab and the Stony Brook Garcia Summer Research Program. Her research was presented at regional science fairs, garnering awards at the Long Island Junior Science and Humanities Symposium and the WAC Lighting Research Fair.

Zhang will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Congratulations to our **2024–2025 Retirees**

On June 6, the Board of Education and professional associations of the Great Neck Public Schools celebrated our 2024–2025 retirees and personally thanked them for their incredible contributions to our school community throughout their careers. We wish all our retirees much happiness as they begin their next chapter.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Stephen C. Lando, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Ed.

ADMINISTRATORS

Nancy Gunning, Assistant Principal, North Middle

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS SUPERVISORS

Donovan Howell, Transportation Supervisor
Michael Powell, North Grounds

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Thomas Coffey, Saddle Rock
Angelo Galante, Phipps
Felix Hernandez, Transportation
Oscar Perez, Saddle Rock

MAINTENANCE

Malvia Persaud, Maintenance

OFFICE STAFF

Josephine Adamo, Lakeville
Louise Fernandez, North High
Barbara Pfrogner, North High
Patricia Sorisi, Pupil Personnel Services
Lois Stergiopoulos, Cumberland Center

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Beatriz Arroyo, North High
Michelle Chalcoff, South High
Kathy Contreras, Saddle Rock
Marianne Derych, North High
Kristina Feingold, J.F. Kennedy
Marie Garvey, North Middle
Dorothy Harrison, Lakeville
Luz Izquierdo, Transportation
Andrea Kaplan, North Middle
Arlyn Katz-Samach, South Middle
Lois Lifshitz, Lakeville
Debra Mazzeo, J.F. Kennedy
Ivy Miller, E.M. Baker
Judy Polizzano, Lakeville
Andrea Ryan, Saddle Rock
Regina Savarese, Parkville
Lillian Sibeni, South High
Karen Stracquadanio, J.F. Kennedy
Terri Zaretzky, Saddle Rock

SCHOOL LUNCH

Stacey Jefferson, North Middle

TEACHERS

Cathlene Behar, North High
Diane Caplain, South Middle
Maddalena Constantino, J.F. Kennedy
Eve Crespi, Saddle Rock
Carla Diesu, South Middle
Katherine Feldman, Lakeville
Gala Handler, South High
Jodi Kahn, North High
Andrea Lilli, Parkville
Nancy Lowenkron, J.F. Kennedy
Johanne Lynch, North High
Ellen Meisel, Lakeville
Kathleen Meller, Pupil Personnel Services
Jeanette Neuwirt, E.M. Baker
Jeffrey Sirotkin, North High
Rosemary Sloggatt, Saddle Rock
Stacy Tanner, South Middle
Jody Teicher, Pupil Personnel Services
Luisa Werny, Saddle Rock

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Steve Chen, *Trustee*
Donna Peirez, *Trustee*
Rebecca Sassouni, *Trustee*

Superintendent of Schools
Kenneth R. Bossert, Ed.D.

Follow us!
Great Neck Public Schools
#DiscoverGreatness

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.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

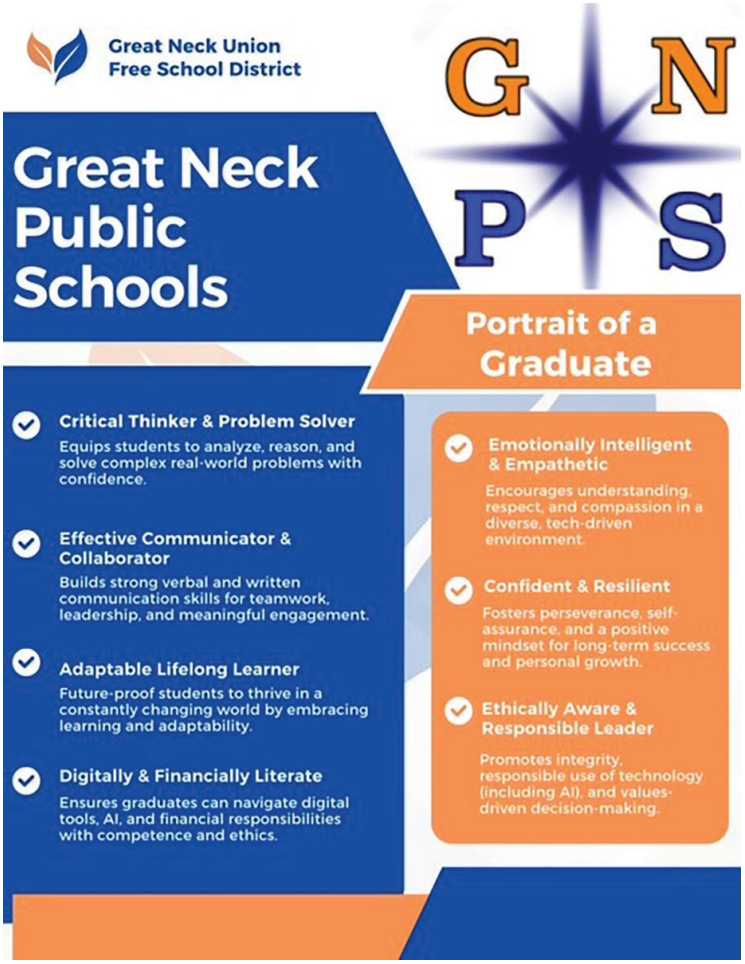
In June, the district proudly concluded a yearlong initiative to define the essential skills, mindsets, and traits students need for success in an ever-changing world. The district partnered with Molloy University for our Portrait of a Graduate project and gathered input from more than 1,800 students, parents, staff, and residents across two comprehensive Thought Exchange surveys.

Portrait of a Graduate is a model adopted by the New York State Education Department as a recommended component of the Blue Ribbon Commission Graduation Measures, an initiative to rethink and reimagine the state's graduation requirements in a way that reflects each individual district's vision for student success.

The final Portrait of a Great Neck Graduate reflects six key attributes:

- Critical Thinker and Problem-Solver.
- Effective Communicator and Collaborator.
- Adaptable Lifelong Learner.
- Digitally and Financially Literate.
- Emotionally Intelligent and Empathetic.
- Ethically Aware and Responsible Leader.

This work marks an important step in aligning district goals and programs with a future-focused vision. Next, the district will integrate these findings into curriculum planning and strategic initiatives, ensuring that every student graduates prepared not only to succeed – but to lead.



Graphic designed by Molloy University student Valeria DeCastro