



**On November 21, 2025, the Communications Conference Committee met in the Syosset High School guidance resource center to discuss various topics with district administrators.**

Below is a summary of the question and answer session in the following order:

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### **Digital Platforms and Sites**

1. **With the addition of ParentSquare, is the district planning to consolidate the various parent communication platforms? Right now, families are using multiple systems — including Pickup Patrol, TeacherEase, the Parent Portal, and ParentSquare (and likely others).**

Each platform currently serves a distinct purpose: **ParentSquare** is used for messaging and file distribution, **TeacherReacher** for scheduling parent-teacher conferences, **Pickup Patrol** for managing student dismissal and pickup plans, and the **ParentPortal/Infinite Campus** for accessing grades and report cards. While these tools each offer unique features tailored to specific needs, the district is always exploring ways to improve the parent experience. If a single platform could effectively support all these functions, the district would certainly consider it.

2. **Teachers use both Google and Canvas. What is the process for determining which is used for each classroom/grade/subject? Who makes the decision on which platform to use? Is there any way to streamline to one platform, as going back and forth between platforms can have an effect on students' organization, especially those who struggle with executive function?**

High school teachers have the option to use either Canvas or Google Classroom, with about 40% of teachers using Canvas. The choice of platform is made by individual teachers based on their instructional needs and preferences. Canvas is not available at the elementary or middle school levels at this time.

Both platforms offer calendar and assignment features, and some teachers may use them for testing. Canvas provides a more structured learning environment, while Google Classroom is a simpler platform. Parents can gain access to both platforms through teacher-provided links or login instructions.

The district understands that switching between platforms can be challenging for students, especially those with executive function difficulties. We also believe that this platform agility is a skill that will benefit students in both college and career. Feedback from families is important, and the district will continue to evaluate and consider future steps toward streamlining tools.

- 3. The district has blocked various sites on student Chromebooks. Some of these sites/resources are used by students to complete their projects or study for their exams. Now with the phone ban, students are no longer able to use their devices as a back-up in these instances. Is there a way to address this or unblock these useful sites during the school day (studying at lunch, during IS periods, etc.)?**

Certain websites and tools, like Quizlet, are blocked because they do not comply with federal laws such as CIPA and New York State Education Law 2d, which are designed to protect student data privacy. However, the district provides approved alternatives that offer similar functionality. For example, Notebook LM allows students to turn notes and handouts into flashcards quickly. Students also have access to platforms like Test Wizard, Castle Learning, Quizizz, and Google Gemini, which support learning and assessment while meeting privacy standards.

## **Literacy**

- 4. What are the benefits of using leveled reading at the elementary level? What is the research based methodology for this selection, as children are being leveled, and their book selections are being limited for independent reading based upon their level? How does the district decide what reading program to use? What direction is the reading program going in/ what's the future of our literacy curriculum?**

At the elementary level, our approach to reading uses the best of both worlds. In the primary grades, children begin with explicit, systematic phonics instruction and decodable books that help them apply what they're learning about sounds and letters—an approach supported by decades of “Science of Reading” research in cognitive science, linguistics, and education. As they grow more fluent and secure in decoding, they transition to leveled texts that offer greater complexity, richer vocabulary, and deeper comprehension work, which research shows are essential for building language, knowledge, and critical thinking. Reading levels are simply a tool for teachers to match instruction and practice to a child's needs—never a limit on what students can choose or enjoy. Our curriculum is grounded in this research base and is continually refined to reflect state guidance and the evolving body of literacy research. Moving

forward, our K–5 literacy program will continue to emphasize strong foundational skills, rich and varied literature, and genuine student choice so every child becomes a confident, capable reader. We continue to stay informed on evolving research to ensure best practices and resources are utilized.

**5. There is an inconsistency amongst elementary schools and classrooms for independent book selection. Why aren't all grades, especially classes within the same school, adhering to the same implementation of literacy curriculum? Do teachers have flexibility with the literacy curriculum?**

There will naturally be some variation in independent book selection across elementary schools and classrooms because independent reading is meant to honor student choice, interest, and readiness—not to prescribe a single, identical system for every child. All schools follow the same district literacy expectations and research-based practices, but teachers may organize classroom libraries or support book choice in slightly different ways to meet the needs of their students. This is aligned with national research showing that effective literacy instruction requires both strong core structures (phonics, foundational skills, comprehension instruction) and professional judgment that responds to the unique learners in each classroom.

Teachers do have flexibility in certain parts of the literacy curriculum, particularly in how they support independent reading, small-group work, and the ways students access their classroom libraries. This flexibility is intentional and supported by research: when teachers can adjust texts, strategies, and routines based on real-time student data, engagement increases and instruction becomes more responsive. At the same time, the district maintains consistent expectations around foundational skills, assessment practices, access to high-quality texts, and the overall progression of K–5 literacy development utilizing the primary resource of the Units of Study. Teachers adhere to a scope and sequence that identifies specific units/topics taught at specific times. Our goal is to balance coherence and consistency with teacher expertise and student-centered decision-making, ensuring that every child receives research-aligned instruction while also nurturing choice, motivation, and a love of reading.

**6. What is used to evaluate a student's writing progress? If a student is not at grade level, what interventions are put in place, to achieve grade level? There are numerous math and reading supports offered at all grade levels in the district, but none for writing. Why is there no writing center/lab in any of the buildings, for all grade levels with certified teachers who specialize in this area?**

We evaluate a student's writing progress using multiple measures, because writing development is complex and involves skills in organization, grammar, sentence structure, idea development, handwriting/keyboard fluency, and application of grade-level standards. Teachers use classroom writing assignments, rubrics aligned to NYSED standards, on-demand writing tasks, and periodic benchmark assessments to

monitor whether students are progressing as expected. These tools help us see both a student's strengths and the specific areas where targeted support may be needed. If a student is not meeting grade-level expectations, our MTSS process guides next steps. Teachers first provide targeted, small-group instruction in the classroom using research-based writing strategies (tier 1). If additional support is needed, students may receive interventions through our learning centers (tiers 2 and 3), where certified teachers (called tutors) provide structured, skill-based remediation in areas such as sentence construction, paragraph development, and foundational writing conventions. Writing interventions are individualized and progress is monitored closely so instruction can be adjusted as students grow.

Rather than design dedicated "writing labs" at the elementary level, writing support is embedded across our tiered MTSS system instead of being separated into a standalone program. Research shows that writing instruction is most effective when it is integrated into content learning, reading, and classroom practice, not isolated from daily curriculum. Our learning center tutors are trained to address writing needs as part of their intervention work, just as they address reading or math goals. This allows support to be flexible, responsive, and tailored to the specific skills students need to strengthen. Our overarching goal is to ensure that all students receive consistent, high-quality writing instruction in the classroom, with targeted intervention available through MTSS when additional support is required.

## **Transportation**

### **7. What is the district's plan for moving to electric school buses per New York State legislation?**

The district has engaged in conversation with both state agencies (NYSERDA) and our transportation contractor regarding electric buses. We collaborated with our transportation contractor in participation in the 2024 Clean School Bus (CSB) Rebate Program, through the U.S. EPA Clean School Bus Program to assist with funding for the installation of both the charging infrastructure and electric school buses. Also, the district, in partnership with our bus contractor, Beacon, completed the 2025 Zero Emission Busing Survey for the state, reporting on the district's progress towards transitioning to zero-emission busing. Beacon has informed us that they are working on a trial with an EV based in their Islandia location serving Sachem. They have experience with EV's outside of New York State.

## **Teachers**

- 8. Please explain the process for teacher negotiations and contracts. Who participates in the process? Does the public have access to what is included in the contract? How often is it renewed and for how long? When is the next renewal?**

The school district and its labor units engage in collective bargaining. The New York State Public Employees' Fair Employment Act, also known as the "Taylor Law," regulates collective bargaining for public employees in the state. Under this law, public employees have the right to unionize, and mandates that public employers negotiate in good faith. This regulation also prohibits public employees from striking.

The district negotiates with seven (7) bargaining units: Syosset Teachers Association, Syosset Principals Association, Administrative Assistant Association, Civil Service Employees Association, Monitors Association, Therapists Association, and the Nurses' Association. Elected representatives from each unit participate in their respective negotiation sessions along with their legal counsel or labor relations specialist. The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent for Business, and the Assistant Superintendent for HR alongside legal counsel represent the District during negotiations.

Negotiations typically begin within the remaining six months of the existing contract. Prior to negotiations, the parties will formulate proposals based on feedback from their respective constituencies. The parties meet in-person during multiple occasions, exchange proposals, and negotiate specific contractual provisions. Items typically include salaries and benefits, as well as working conditions, employee evaluation processes, and grievance procedures. An agreement reached by the negotiating parties must be formally approved by their respective constituencies. The entire unit votes on their contract by confidential ballot, and a majority vote ratifies the agreement. The Board of Education must also formally approve and adopt the contract. If ratified by both sides, a new contract is officially in place. If rejected by either party, the negotiating teams return to the bargaining table. The typical duration of a contract is four to five years.

The public can view the adopted agreements on the District website under [the Human Resources tab](#).

- 9. Teachers only offer one day of extra help, which is all that is required per their existing contract. Is there any way we can increase the number of days extra help is offered at the Elementary and Middle school levels?**

Teachers often provide more than the contractually required time for extra help, often meeting with students on an individual basis when needed. Please speak with your building principal about alignment of tutoring sessions with testing schedules.

- 10. What is the policy for teachers updating grades and the calendar in the Infinite Campus portal in a timely fashion? What is the district's policy/standard timeframe for a teacher to grade and return tests? Often, teachers reuse their tests year to year and do not return graded tests. What can be done about returning graded tests, so students can review them in order to learn from their mistakes?**

[Policy 4710: Grading Systems](#) governs teachers responsibility to provide students "prompt feedback." It states: "Teachers are expected to provide students with prompt feedback on assignments and assessments and will promptly post all grades to the student management system utilized by the School District." Best practice is for tests/assignments to be returned to students within a week of submission. However, this will vary based on the length of the assignment. Students have the right to review and inspect their graded tests and assignments.

### **Guidance/College Offerings**

- 11. What steps does the guidance department take after the admissions cycle is complete to analyze trends, acceptances, rejections, and first year transfers? This would be beyond making sure information is updated in Naviance.**

After the admissions cycle is complete, the guidance department conducts a thorough review of application outcomes to identify trends in acceptances, rejections, and student wait lists. Through Naviance, we analyze statistics to better understand patterns and outcomes for our students, which we discuss in our department meetings to inform future counseling strategies. In addition, we connect directly with college representatives through visits and conversations to gain insights into evolving admissions trends and requirements, ensuring that we can provide the most current and effective guidance to our students in the next cycle.

**12. When counselor recommendations and student transcripts are due to a college, is there an internal system that ensures they are not submitted at or past the deadline? What confirmation is provided to the student so they know theirs have been submitted and when they have been submitted?**

The guidance department has a clear internal process to ensure all counselor materials—transcripts, letters of recommendation, and Common Application forms—are submitted well before college deadlines. For instance, if materials are submitted the day before a college deadline, they are uploaded and timestamped at that time, confirming submission ahead of the cutoff on Naviance. To manage this process, students complete a transcript request form and meet with their counselor, listing each school and its specific deadline, allowing counselors to track and prioritize submissions accordingly. These procedures are reviewed with students and families during Junior planning meetings, Grade 11 College Planning Workshop, the Grade 12 Parent Workshop, and Senior Naviance Groups. Students can view confirmation of submission directly through Naviance, which indicates when their materials have been sent to each college.

**13. Is there a reason National Merit Commended Scholar recipients are no longer announced/recognized by Syosset?**

Syosset continues to recognize our National Merit Semifinalists and Finalists, as these distinctions represent an exceptional honor awarded to a very select group of students nationwide.

**14. Information has consistently been shared regarding the AP offerings/enrollment in these courses. However, metrics are not provided for the grades students receive or their exam scores. Can that data be shared with the community? Also, is there a metric that can be provided for the number of students that have received transferable college credit from these AP courses?**

While we regularly share information about AP course offerings and enrollment, specific data on student grades and exam scores is not typically shared publicly to maintain student confidentiality. However, overall presentations have been made to discuss the mean score of all exams, and specific subject related tests. Each year, Syosset High School [publishes a profile](#) where some of these numbers are made available.

The number of students receiving transferable college credit varies each year because colleges and universities adjust their AP credit and course approval policies annually. For this reason, it is difficult to provide consistent metrics on AP credit transfers.

**15. Dual-enrollment courses are not promoted as much as AP courses. How do parents become aware of all dual enrollment courses that are offered? Why are fewer dual enrollment courses offered than APs?**

Guidance counselors and teachers actively promote and recommend our dual-enrollment courses offered through programs such as Long Island University (LIU) and Syracuse University (SUPA). Counselors specifically discuss these opportunities during program planning presentations with students, evening workshops, and individual meetings to help them understand the benefits and college credit options available. These courses are also reviewed in detail in the [high school curriculum guides](#). While there are fewer dual enrollment courses than APs due to college partnership requirements and course approval processes, our offerings continue to expand—most recently with another SUPA course approved for the 2026–27 school year. We also offer dual enrollment courses in English and Social Studies that meet New York State graduation requirements, ensuring students have meaningful and rigorous academic options beyond AP classes.

**16. The district prides itself on the advanced classes they offer and the extensive amount of support and interventions provided to students who need them. Presentations are often given, highlighting the students who benefit from this. What about a profile of the average students who excel at the required regent classes and graduation requirements? What can be shared about the students with good grades in Regents classes, who do not fall into either of the categories above?**

Students who excel in Regents-level classes and meet or exceed graduation requirements are very much recognized and celebrated within our district. Those who achieve strong academic performance are honored through the school's Honor Roll each marking period and may also qualify for induction into the National Honor Society in 12th grade. In addition, there are a variety of subject-specific honor societies—such as those for world languages, science, math, and social studies—that recognize individual student success and commitment to learning. These recognitions ensure that all students, not only those in advanced or support programs, are acknowledged for their hard work and academic achievement.

## Artificial Intelligence

- 17. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is always evolving. How is the school district addressing the rise in student and teacher use of AI, both in learning and coursework? Is the district working on using resources to set parameters for how it is used by both students and teachers? If so, how is this communicated to students and parents?**

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) quickly evolves, our district is taking a thoughtful, proactive approach to how students and teachers use these tools. Our focus is on digital citizenship, ethical use, and clear communication with families. Across all grade levels, the district is working to set clear parameters for AI use, build staff and student understanding, and ensure families stay informed through curriculum guides and parent presentations.

### **Secondary Level**

- **Information Fluency Curriculum:** Students learn about disinformation, bias, citations, plagiarism, AI use, digital citizenship, search strategies, and social media literacy through ongoing instruction in Wellness, Health, and Library programs.
- **AI Professional Learning Community:** A secondary-level PLC is guiding staff and students on the ethical and responsible use of AI and exploring ways AI can support instruction.
- **Student Curriculum Committee:** The high school's student curriculum committee regularly discusses curriculum issues, including how AI should and should not be used.
- **Family Communication:** Parents can learn more through monthly PTSA curriculum presentations and by accessing curriculum guides on the district website.

### **Elementary Level**

- **Teacher-First AI Pilot Projects:** Elementary students do not regularly use AI tools in the classroom setting. Instead, the district has focused on helping teachers learn how AI can safely enhance lesson planning, differentiation, and communication.
- **Digital Citizenship Instruction:** All elementary students receive age-appropriate digital citizenship lessons in Library Media, covering online safety, personal information, trustworthy sources, and digital footprints.
- **Family Communication:** Parents can learn more through elementary curriculum presentations and by accessing curriculum information on the district website.

## Mascot

- 18. Since the district has an extension until August 31, 2026 for making new mascot changes, why was the new mascot not at least used in name during this time? Could the Braves name have been used during this time? Regardless of the outcome of the Federal and State debate, will Sabres be the official mascot? If so, what is the overall cost for rebranding?**

The Board of Education officially retired the Braves mascot by resolution on May 8, 2023. Accordingly, the name can no longer be used. Additionally, the State regulation requires that no staff wear clothing with the retired mascot name or image. Both the State and Federal education departments are engaged in conflict over whether the State regulation violates Federal regulations. The Board of Education discussed that situation at their June 2025 public meeting and Dr. Rogers tried to capture that discussion in a Friday Update (6/20/25) by noting the part highlighted below:

"We have a winner. After extensive community engagement through a mascot selection steering committee and multiple rounds of voting, the Syosset Sabres (featuring a Sabretooth Tiger) team name was the overwhelming favorite in the final round of voting. Simultaneously, this week, the New York State Education Department granted Syosset an extension until August 31, 2026 for finalizing any remaining changes, recognizing that the earliest the capital work could take place would be the summer of 2026. **As was discussed at the School Board meeting earlier this month, the extension allows the conflict between the State and Federal governments to play out so we are in a position to react appropriately, whatever the final outcome.**"

The costs involved could be somewhat significant. The largest cost will be \$80-100,000 to replace the end zone on the football field. Over the past several years, as uniforms are retired, new replacements have used the "Varsity S" branding instead of the Braves. The costs incurred have been part of the typical replacement cycle. There are several scoreboards that will require new "skins" (metal fronts) that will cover the existing branding. These will cost less than \$10,000 to replace. There is some padding on the SHS gym walls that will require replacement at a cost of approximately \$5,000. We continue to follow the intergovernmental conflict and when there are any developments of note, we'll report them to the Board and community.