RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING SESSION
APRIL 8, 2026

Present: President Erica Wagner
Trustee Jason Carmel
Trustee Halli Gatenio
Trustee Ruth Homberg
Trustee Alex Rainert
Student Representative Valentina Ferrante
Mr. Michael Burke, Superintendent of Schools
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Corrine Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

I. **Adjournment of Executive Session, Opening of Public Meeting**

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Rainert and seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, that the executive session be adjourned and the Public Meeting be opened.

AYES: **All Present**
NAYES: **None**

II. **Opening of Meeting**

President Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

III. **Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 2026 Board of Education Meeting**

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Gatenio and seconded by Trustee Rainert, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the Minutes of the February 11, 2026 Board of Education Meeting.

AYES: **Trustees Gatenio, Homberg and Rainert**
ABSTAIN: **Trustee Carmel**
NAYES: **None**

IV. Discussion

Community Survey Survey

Mr. Burke reviewed the responses to the community survey. He reported that they received 121 responses, 82% of which were from parents spread throughout all four buildings, but the majority were from the Middle School. The topics covered instruction and program, school culture, operations, and communications.

They are happy with the curriculum but requested more opportunities for advanced learning. They would like to see more real world opportunities, less technology, and more academic and arts clubs. 93% of the respondents feel that Rye Neck prepares students for post-secondary life, 95% feel that there is a positive learning environment, and 96% of the students who responded feel welcome and respected. The respondents prefer ParentSquare for communications, but noted that they are still getting used to it.

The Board discussed the feedback for how the District can improve.

Bond Referendum Update

Mr. Burke and Mrs. Mahar gave a summary of the referendum costs and process. As of now the estimated total cost of the fields is $20.2 million, but this can change.

2026-2027 Board of Ed Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed the proposed 2026-2027 meeting schedule. There were no comments and the Board agreed to adopt the schedule at the April 21st meeting.

Cell Phone Policy

Discussion was had regarding implementation of the policy. The staff is still enforcing rules and the administrators are still reminding teachers of the rules. There is concern about cheating with phones, and the administrators are seeking feedback from staff. It was noted that sometimes phone use is required in class for certain lessons. Mr. Burke encouraged parents to reach out with their concerns.

Board Members in Non-Voting Positions

Discussion was had regarding Board members holding nonvoting positions in a community group. They can be volunteers, but cannot sign contracts and cannot be a voting member. This should be part of the information given to new Board members so that disclosures can be made.

Policy Committee Update

Trustee Homberg reported that the Committee met on Monday, March 23rd and reviewed the 2000 and 3000 policy sections. These sections had already been reviewed in detail, so the focus was on any updates since that time. They discussed the following policies:

Policy 2150 - Filling Board Vacancies - in relation to the upcoming election, where seats with different term lengths will be open. Legal counsel advised that in such cases, term selection should follow vote totals: the candidate with the most votes selects first (choosing either the 1- or 3-year term), followed by the next highest vote-getter, and so on. Counsel recommended updating the policy to reflect this approach and noted that using a different method in a contested election could risk invalidating both the election and the budget vote.

Policy 2160 in connection with this evening's agenda.

- This is from Policy 2160: A Board member, officer or employee may be involved as a volunteer, officer or employee in a charitable organization which has a relationship with the district. If a Board member is a board member, officer or employee of the charitable organization the Board member must disclose such relationship in writing to the district, and the Board member must recuse himself or herself from any discussions or votes relating to the charitable organization which may come before the Board. When participating in the activities of the charitable organization, the Board member, officer, or employee shall not disclose any confidential information learned in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further personal interests. Additionally, the Board member, officer or employee shall not make representations on behalf of the district unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board….It is a conflict of interest for a Board member, officer or employee to benefit personally from contracts made in their official capacity.

Policy 2510 - includes a reminder that newly elected Board members should be invited to meet with the Superintendent and administrative staff to review district operations and services. This is especially relevant with new members anticipated following the May election.

In addition, they discussed the Committee process going forward and future workflow. Since we have already reviewed policies 6000 through 9700 this year, and NYSSBA provides quarterly updates, they will review the 4000 series at the April meeting and the 5000 series at the May meeting. This will ensure all sections are current following the comprehensive review conducted over the past few years. After these meetings, the Committee will shift to a quarterly meeting schedule aligned with NYSSBA updates, unless more urgent issues arise.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for April 28 at 9:00 AM.

V. <u>Adjournment</u>

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Homberg and seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, there being no further business before the Board that the Board of Education Planning Session of April 8, 2026 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present
NAYES: None

President Wagner adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Chiera