



The Panther Press

SPRING 2026

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Empowering excellence today, developing tomorrow's achievers, forever Miller Place proud."

www.millerplace.k12.ny.us

Congratulations to our Class of 2026 Valedictorian and Salutatorian!

Valedictorian: Stephen Ye



Miller Place High School's class of 2026 valedictorian, Stephen Ye, is an exceptionally talented and hardworking student, garnering significant achievements—in and out of the classroom—and exemplifying what it means to be a Miller Place student.

Stephen served as the president of student government, spearheading fundraising efforts to revive and plan the school's senior trip. He also served as the president of Mathletes and the co-president of Science Olympiad, competing with both teams over the course of four years and contributing to the winning of six medals. During the 2025-26 school year, he served as the ex officio student representative on the school district Board of Education, where he reported monthly on behalf of Miller Place High School students. In addition, Stephen founded the LI Youth Development Chess Club, and is a nationally ranked player himself, formerly being in the top 30 players for his age group. He also worked as a researcher for the Brookhaven National Laboratory High School Research Program, studying physics and presenting his findings at a large-scale conference earlier this school year. Stephen is a musician as well, performing with the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College symphony orchestra as the concertmaster in 2024. He is also the founder and CEO of a tech startup called CycleCircuit Computers Inc., where he builds and configures custom computer systems. Stephen is headed to Princeton University in the fall, where he plans to study Operations Research and Financial Engineering.

Stephen has already accomplished so much at Miller Place and beyond. Through his inspiring dedication to academics and his drive to excel in everything he does, Stephen Ye has left a lasting impression on Miller Place High School.

Salutatorian: Anthony Galfano



Miller Place High School's class of 2026 salutatorian, Anthony Galfano, demonstrates the values that Miller Place was built upon with his dedication to academic achievement, music performance, athletics, and community service.

A talented musician, Anthony is a member of the pit orchestra and pep band as a clarinet player, serving as the first chair clarinet in the pit orchestra during his sophomore, junior, and senior years. He is also an accomplished athlete. He was the varsity soccer captain in his junior and senior years, as well as being a member of the Varsity Badminton Team. Anthony is dedicated to serving the community as well, working as a teacher's assistant for Friends of the Arts Music Camp and participating in various service projects as a member of the National Honor Society and Tri-M Honor Society. Anthony plans to continue his education at Binghamton University in the fall.

Anthony has distinguished himself as an outstanding student and member of the community with his leadership and dedication to excelling in everything he does. Miller Place congratulates Anthony on all of his hard work and looks forward to seeing the bright future ahead of him.

A Message From the Board of Education

As we move through the second half of the school year, this is a meaningful time to reflect on the progress across our District and reaffirm our shared commitment to the success of every student. The achievements of our students—in classrooms, on stages, in music rooms, and on athletic fields—highlight the strength and spirit of the Miller Place community. We are grateful to our families for their continued support, which plays a vital role in student success. Our students continue to demonstrate strong academic growth across multiple measures, including Regents performances, mastery levels, and AP achievement, reflecting their hard work, the dedication of our teachers, and the leadership of our administrators. While we remain focused on continued growth, we also recognize the importance of celebrating the meaningful progress taking place throughout our schools.

Superintendent Search Update

The Miller Place Board of Education is pleased to announce the successful completion of its superintendent search and proudly welcomes Dr. Marc Ferris to the Miller Place school community. Dr. Ferris brings a depth of experience, a student-centered approach to leadership, and a strong commitment to fostering supportive school environments that reflect the values of the District. He will begin his role on August 1 and will have the opportunity to work alongside Mr. Seth Lipshie through his retirement on August 31, ensuring a thoughtful and seamless transition. The Board is confident that he will build upon the District's strong foundation, continue advancing its Strategic Plan, and lead with integrity, vision, and a focus on student success.

Upcoming Budget Vote

As we wrap up this year's budget process, we would like to acknowledge the continued progress across Miller Place Schools and express our sincere appreciation for the community's steadfast support of our students, schools, and shared commitment to educational excellence. Please remember to vote on the school budget May 19.

Sincerely,

Lisa Reitan
President, Miller Place School District Board of Education

Exploring Sites in Boston

Members of the senior class recently traveled to Boston for an unforgettable field trip that brought history, culture, and science to life. Highlights included a Boston Massacre town hall debate and visits to the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, the Museum of Science, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the New England Holocaust Memorial, as well as a guided tour of historic Fenway Park. The trip provided students with the opportunity to connect classroom learning to real-world experiences while exploring one of America's most historic cities.



A Message From Superintendent Seth Lipshie

As we patiently await the arrival of spring and warmer weather, our students remain focused on their efforts to achieve their year-end goals. These accomplishments celebrate the milestones of our students and staff, featuring award ceremonies for our senior athletes; academic awards for both seniors and underclassmen; and moving-up ceremonies for our second grade class, our fifth grade class, and our eighth grade class, culminating in the graduation ceremony for our high school seniors.

I want to continue to share our progress with the Miller Place UFSD Five-Year Strategic Plan, focusing on Pillar 4, specifically facility improvements.



DISTRICT OFFICE

- New Memorial Drive entrance sign
- District office lobby branding
- Naming of facilities: District office conference room



ANDREW MULLER PRIMARY SCHOOL

- New flooring
- New fencing

Continued on next page



LADDIE A. DECKER SOUND BEACH SCHOOL

- Conference room updated
- Restroom refurbished
- New playground equipment
- Room 159 updated
- Landscaping/tree removal
- New fencing



NORTH COUNTRY ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Art room updated
- Classroom upgrades
- New PA system
- Faculty room updated



MILLER PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

- Art classrooms updated
- Parking lot updates: Student lot/front entrance lot
- Ventilation update
- New fencing
- Painted storage containers and branding signage
- Naming of facilities: gymnasium and court

I look forward to seeing you at one of our many end-of-year celebrations. As always, I look forward to working with students, parents, guardians, and staff to continue to improve on our student success and continue to make Miller Place the best possible District.

Seth Lipshie
Superintendent of Schools

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

ANDREW MULLER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Students at Andrew Muller Primary School experienced engaging, hands-on learning beyond the classroom as every grade level participated in a field trip designed to enrich their studies. Kindergarten students visited the Long Island Explorium, where they participated in an exciting roller coaster construction workshop and explored a variety of interactive STEAM activities. The experience allowed students to experiment, build, and discover through play-based learning. First grade classes attended a live performance of *Winnie the Pooh* at Theatre Three. Prior to the trip, students read an age-appropriate version of the story in class. Following the performance, they engaged in thoughtful discussions, comparing and contrasting the book with the live production, deepening their understanding of storytelling across different mediums. Second grade students traveled to the Long Island Science Center, where they explored concepts related to simple shapes and structures. Through hands-on exhibits and STEAM-based activities, students were able to apply classroom learning in a dynamic, real-world setting. These meaningful field experiences provided students with opportunities to explore, create, and connect their learning, supporting continued discovery and growth across all grade levels.



LADDIE A. DECKER SOUND BEACH SCHOOL

Paleontology Club students participated in a variety of activities to learn about what it is like to be a paleontologist and to explore the many species of dinosaurs. They identified dinosaur models based on distinguishing features using their knowledge as well as various dinosaur encyclopedias. They also imagined their own dinosaurs and named them while learning about what the scientific prefixes and suffixes mean. The students also explored the real fossils of trilobites, brachiopods, and belemnites, and learned about the different types of fossils. The group even made their own trace fossils, mold fossils, cast fossils, and true form fossils. Recently, they excavated mini dinosaurs and dug for dinosaur bones. Then students constructed these bones into dinosaurs, identified the dinosaurs, and researched each one so that they could be displayed in our LADSBS Museum of Natural History. Students have been completing a junior paleontologist activity book, inspired by the National Park Service Junior Paleontologist Program. Students will have the opportunity to earn a Junior Paleontologist badge and certificate through the program.



NORTH COUNTRY ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

During World Language Week, eighth grade Spanish students had the exciting opportunity to participate in a salsa dancing workshop led by Ms. Dunne, a high school teacher and trained ballroom dancer. Ms. Dunne began by sharing the rich cultural background and history of salsa, highlighting its roots and global influence. Students then transitioned from instruction to application, practicing foundational salsa steps and techniques while building rhythm, coordination, and confidence. This engaging, hands-on experience brought culture to life, blending history, movement, and music into a memorable and meaningful learning opportunity.



AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

MILLER PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

In April, tenth graders at Miller Place High School engaged in authentic experiences that supported their anti-bias and Holocaust educations. The organization Spirit of Triumph joined English classes to present a virtual reality tour of Auschwitz, complementing students' reading of Elie Wiesel's *Night*. Additionally, a group of students was selected to attend the YOUnity Teen Conference. There, they heard a personal testimony from Holocaust survivor Manfred Korman and viewed exhibits on loan from the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center and Suffolk County Community College. A powerful keynote address by Nick Winton, son of famed Holocaust rescuer Sir Nicholas Winton, concluded the day. Students left inspired by the impact one person can have by choosing to do good.



ATHLETICS NEWS

A Successful Winter Athletic Season

The varsity wrestling team has had a historic run during the 2025-2026 season, winning every possible postseason team championship available to them. Under the leadership of Head Coach Matt Kaszubski and Assistant Coach Dan Cassera, the team earned the titles of League 7 Regular Season Dual Team Champions, Section 11 D2 Dual Team Champions, Section 11 D2 Tournament Team Champions, and New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) State D2 Dual Team Champions. The team's state title is the first one for the wrestling team in Miller Place's history.

In addition to the team awards, several individuals from the varsity wrestling team earned significant accolades. Alex Southworth received 2nd place in Section XI, as well as 6th at the NYSPHSAA D2 Championships for his weight class. Anthony Perrino and Brayden Ellis received the champion title for their weight classes at Section XI, with Anthony additionally taking home 8th place at the NYSPHSAA D2 Championships.



The winter varsity track team made their way to state championships as well this winter. Coach Sean O'Brien and Assistant Coach Nicole Cirrito led the team to victory, with two of the boys' relay teams becoming the champions of the 4x400 and 4x800 relay events at the Section XI meet. Both teams progressed to the state championship, where they each placed on the podium. The 4x400 team—Nick DiCaprio, Nico Gasparis, Dylan Iannello, and Ethan Damato—earned 3rd place at states, while the 4x800 team—Nick DiCaprio, Nico Gasparis, Dylan Iannello, and Noah Felice—earned 6th place. We are proud to celebrate the achievements of our winter athletes and look forward to building upon their successes!

ARTS AND MUSIC NEWS

STUDENT MUSICIANS SELECTED FOR ALL-COUNTY

This spring, a group of talented student musicians from Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School and North Country Road Middle School attended their first SCMEA Suffolk All-County Festival. In preparation, they dedicated time to refining their skills during the Division 1 and 2 East rehearsals held in March. Participation in this festival is a prestigious honor; as students are selected from across Suffolk County based on their musical excellence. These top performers come together to rehearse and perform as part of elite All-County ensembles, representing the very best of student musicianship in the region.



PREPARING FOR NYSSMA

In March, members of the Miller Place High School chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society mentored young musicians from North Country Road Middle School as they prepared for their upcoming NYSSMA Solo Festival, held on April 21 at Miller Place High School. High school student leaders worked one-on-one and in small groups with middle school performers, offering guidance on technique, musical interpretation, and performance confidence. The mentorship provided younger students with valuable insight into the adjudication process while helping them refine their pieces in a supportive and encouraging environment.



DISTRICT STUDENT ARTISTS SHINE IN REGIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Students across the District are being recognized for their creativity and talent as their artwork earns spots in prestigious local and regional exhibitions. From colorful kindergarten paintings to intricate high school mixed-media pieces, these young artists are showcasing a wide range of styles and perspectives. The selected works reflect not only technical skill but also the individuality and imagination of each student. The exhibitions, which include Colors of Long Island and Suffolk County Art Leaders Association (SCALA) All County, offer students a rare opportunity to present their work to a broader audience. The art department would like to recognize and congratulate Abby Mattina (grade 1), Amelia Ahedo (grade 2), Emma Head (grade 5), Hannah Murray (grade 5), Charlotte Damboise (grade 8), Alexandra Leong (grade 7), Collette Davoudiasl (grade 9), Chloe Chen (grade 9), Lily McGrath (grade 10), Victoria Necci (grade 9), Jack Roach (grade 12), and SCALA Senior Scholarship recipient Amelia Avalos (grade 12).

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

7 Memorial Drive, Miller Place, NY 11764

Board of Education: Lisa Reitan, *President* • Bryan Makarius, *Vice President* • John Galligan, *Trustee*
Jennifer Keller, *Trustee* • Andrea Spaniolas, *Trustee* • Stephen Ye, *Student Representative*

Superintendent of Schools: Seth A. Lipshie