

K-12 Community & Civic Engagement

Syosset Central School District

May 11, 2026



Board of Education Goals

Inclusive and Engaging Culture, Climate, and Character

At all levels, we will cultivate a kind, safe, and supportive culture that exemplifies P.R.I.D.E.—Patience, Respect, Integrity, Dignity, and Empathy—ensuring all students thrive. Our learning environments will foster wellness, balance, and a deep appreciation for multiple perspectives, empowering students to navigate evolving challenges with confidence and compassion.

Connected Community

We will foster a strong, collaborative culture and make meaningful connections with all families and stakeholders, ensuring an inclusive and cooperative school community where every person feels valued and has a true sense of belonging. Through effective communication and deeper engagement, we will strengthen relationships among students, staff, families, and the broader community, ensuring that everyone feels heard, supported, and invested in our shared success.

Guiding Inquiry

Who am I?

- How am I unique?
- How do my family, culture, values, and traditions influence who I am?
- How have I changed over time?
- How do I deal with challenges?

Who am I in my school community?

- How does my identity shape my relationships?
- How do I belong and contribute to my school community?
- How do my actions affect others?
- How do I show respect and care for my school and those in my school?

Who am I in my community?

- How do I connect with and learn from people who are different from me?
- How do I belong and contribute to my community?
- How do we work together to achieve common goals in my community?
- How do I show respect and care for those in my neighborhood?

Who am I in the world?

- How are communities around the world connected to each other?
- How do I belong and contribute as a global citizen?
- How do my actions impact people in other parts of the world?
- How can I make a difference in a global community?

“Who Am I?”

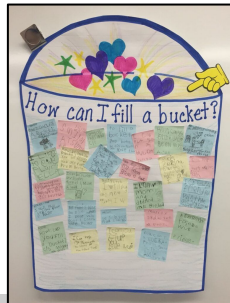
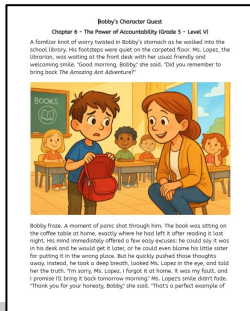
Laying the Foundation Through Explicit Teaching

- Explicit Teaching of Expectations & PRIDE
- Harmony Program & Buddy Up Activities
- A.I. Personalized Social Stories
- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Identity maps and belonging activities
- Morning Meetings/Community Circles
- Read-alouds and discussions
- Classroom systems - token economies
- Celebrations of Kindness

“Who Am I in My School Community?”

Teaching Community Through Shared Experiences

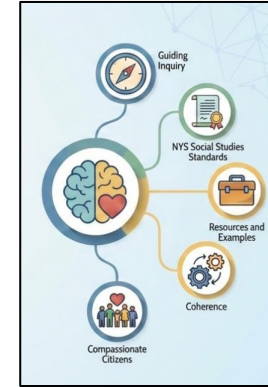
- PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)
- SYO-PRIDE & School-PRIDE
- Creating a “Culture of Care”
- Community Update - “Bright Spots”
- “Caught Being Kind” school wide recognition
- **No Place For Hate Program**
- Unity Day & Celebrations
- Student Government
- School Clubs
- MTSS SEL Supports



Bringing the Guiding Inquiries to Life Through Explicit Instruction

Key Features

- Organized around the five core SEL competencies:
 - Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making
- Each competency connects to self-awareness, community, and civic engagement
- Aligned with our Guiding Inquiry, NYS Social Studies standards, and state SEL benchmarks



Instructional Coherence

- Provides a continuum of grade-level skills and behaviors aligned to NYS SEL benchmarks, Code of Conduct and PRIDE
- Ensures consistency and coherence across grade levels and across all schools
- Serves as a centralized resource to support instruction districtwide

Practical Support for Teachers & Students

- Offers clear strategies, routines, and examples for classroom use
- Supports students in growing as caring, responsible members of their school and community



Bringing the Guiding Inquiries to Life Through Explicit Instruction

Third Grade Spotlight



Core Skills

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



Learning Activities

- Reflection Journals
- Mindfulness Activities
- Perspective-Taking Stories
- Communication Games



Classroom Resource: Calming Strategies

CALMING STRATEGIES
When I feel upset, I can choose to...

 take deep breaths	 read a book	 listen to music
 get a drink	 count to 10	 take a walk
 rest on a pillow	 think happy thoughts	 hug a stuffed animal

Belonging & Read Aloud

Fostering Belonging

Kindness:

Say something nice to someone new.
Offer help when someone needs it.



Include Everyone:

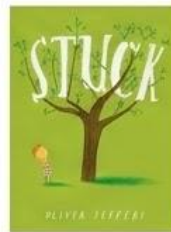
Invite others to play or join your group.
Listen to everyone's ideas.



Respect Differences:

Be curious about what makes others unique.
Celebrate what's different about each person!

Featured Read Aloud: *Stuck*



Focus Questions:

1. Does Floyd think about decisions before he makes them?
2. How do his decisions affect others?

Extending Learning: From Self-Understanding to Community Contribution

- Students apply explicitly taught self-awareness and community skills to take meaningful action that contributes to their school and beyond
- At Robbins Lane, we utilize a digital platform to celebrate the exceptional work of our students and teachers. Through "The Daily Chirp," our school wide newspaper, and "SYO Spark," our district-wide newspaper, students are empowered with a platform to find their voice, showcase others achievements, and celebrate the vibrant spirit of our entire community
- Using the fundamental skills our students are learning at school, our newspapers successfully spotlight powerful stories of kindness and community service



Click slide to play video!

The logo features the text 'SYO SPARK' in a bold, stylized font. 'SYO' is in yellow, and 'SPARK' is in black with a yellow outline and a jagged, flame-like background. The background is dark with various hand-drawn icons: a lightbulb, a butterfly, a globe, and a magnifying glass.

SYO SPARK

Igniting Curiosity. Celebrating Community.

A Districtwide Platform for Connection and Community

- Elementary-level newsletter designed to bring all seven schools together
- Released monthly, each elementary school given opportunity to contribute
- Highlights how students and staff give back through volunteering, service projects, and community initiatives, showing their commitment to making a positive impact
- Highlights the great work of students and teachers in and beyond our school community

The Daily Chirp: Elevating Student Voice



An engaging way for the Robbins Lane community to come together and celebrate the work of students both inside and outside of school.

- Incorporates content that is designed to be kid-friendly and engaging for elementary students
- Provides students an opportunity to find meaningful stories in the school community which fosters collaboration and critical thinking
- Elevates student voice - students select content, create interview questions, write, and edit stories
- Encourages civic responsibility by identifying those in our community who make a difference

Robbins Lane

DAILY CHIRP

Winter Edition

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION

RL Says Farewell to Ms. Alfred and Ms. Tombrello

As many of you may already know, Ms. Alfred and Ms. Tombrello are retiring! We will miss them so much! We had the opportunity to sit down with them and get to know them a little bit better.

Ms. Alfred has been at Robbins Lane for 26 years! Ms. Alfred has taught many grade levels and specialties throughout her career. Did you know before she came to RL she was a PE teacher? She is creative, innovative, and an amazing friend to all staff at Robbins Lane. We are going to miss her so much. Even though she is such an asset to our school community, she was not always a teacher. Early in her career, Ms. Alfred worked at a basketball camp. She also worked at Macy's in Manhattan selling shoes (she loves shoes). Ms. Alfred was even an aerobics and swim instructor! A fun fact about Ms. Alfred's career is she taught Corbin Bleu who was in High School Musical!

Ms. Alfred has many hobbies. One of her favorite hobbies is growing and arranging flowers. She makes beautiful flower arrangements! When Ms. Alfred retires, she is first going to see her daughter in West Palm Beach, Florida. In the future, she would like to get an RV and travel across different states. We will miss you, Ms. Alfred!

Ms. Tombrello has been at RL for 18 years! She is kind, hardworking, and never fails to make us laugh. She has been a teaching assistant in many different classrooms throughout the years and will miss all of the friends she made dearly. She will miss her class so much! Her favorite RL memory is the fun class parties. Her favorite hobby is to crochet. She will miss the kids, the teachers and the TA's.
(Continued on next page.)



“Who Am I in My Community?” Small Actions, Big Impact

The “Little Kids, Big Difference” section highlights kids who have recently taken positive action to make a difference in our school or community!

Our twin second graders participate in “Mitzvah Mondays,” making 1,000 sandwiches for local shelters, and annual Thanksgiving “Cook-a-Thons” to support families in need. These efforts demonstrate kindness, responsibility, and leadership, showing they make a meaningful impact both in and beyond the school community.



“Who Am I in My Community?” Small Actions, Big Impact

The “People in Our Neighborhood” section highlights individuals in our community who make a positive impact, showing students how their talents, passions, and actions can bring people together and make a difference!

Through their music, “The Tradewinds” spread joy and bring people together in a positive, inclusive way, modeling for students how one’s talents and passions can make a meaningful impact. Their example encourages students to reflect on the guiding inquiry, “Who am I in my school community and world?” by showing how they, too, can contribute, connect, and uplift others.

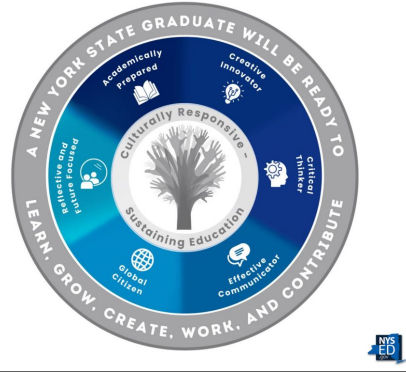


Click slide to play video!

Empowering our Students: Purpose, Empathy, and Action

A New York State high school graduate will be:

- Academically Prepared
- A Creative Innovator
- A Critical Thinker
- An Effective Communicator
- A Global Citizen
- Reflective and Future Focused



“...a deep appreciation for multiple perspectives, empowering students to navigate evolving challenges with confidence and compassion.”

“...we will strengthen relationships among students, staff, families, and the broader community, ensuring that everyone feels heard, supported, and invested in our shared success.”



Middle School

Relationships, Empathy, Understanding, & Action



Core Philosophy

Embrace service learning as an opportunity to build relationships while practicing civic participation.

Foster active engagement and self-motivation in the real world.

Goals

"Culture, Climate, and Character"

- Cultivating compassion and kindness
- Inspiring altruistic community efforts
- Safe & supportive learning environments

Highlighted Initiatives

H.B. Thompson

Challenger Basketball pairs our students with developmental disabilities with our Student Ambassadors.

South Woods

Peer Leaders partner with local organizations to learn about their role in the community, mentor and inspire peers, and create and lead service initiatives.

South Woods

Tara DiBernardo: Peer Leader Advisor
Nihalya Sriram, Adrian Nieves: 8th Grade Peer Leaders

H.B. Thompson

Kristian Muller: Challenger sports coach/ Ambassadors supervisor
Jacob Mankuta, Brooke Lee, Luna Ratner-Student Ambassadors

H.B. Thompson: Challenger Sports



Cheerleaders Antonella and Raina were joined by some of our former and current Syosset High School cheerleaders for a halftime performance.



Jayden and his mother celebrating his last home game at HBT's Legacy Night for 8th graders



2025 Challenger Basketball Team

H.B. Thompson: Challenger Sports



Video filmed by student presenter Jacob Mankuta using a mounted GoPro



H.B. Thompson: Student Ambassador Program

Student Ambassadors

Brooke Lee: "Why did you want to become a Student Ambassador?"

Luna Ratner: "What is your favorite memory from Student Ambassadors this year?"

Jacob Mankuta: "Why is Student Ambassadors an important program?"





From Inspiration to Action: Adults as Models of Service



A Meaningful Partnership

This year, Syosset teachers proudly formed a partnership with Ronald McDonald House (RMH), bringing compassion and support to families in need by:

- **Preparing snacks and family meals**
- **Hosting community brunches**
- **Assembling care snack bags**



The Ripple Effect of Service

The teachers' passion and fulfillment quickly spread. **Inspired to follow their lead, the South Woods Peer Leaders:**

- Contacted RMH to learn how **students** could emulate their teachers and get involved.
- Planned with RMH reps.
- Held workshops for peers about how RMH provides a "home away from home" for families of seriously ill children.
- **Planned meaningful service learning projects and encouraged the whole school to get involved.**

SW Peer Leaders: Understanding Through Service



Peer Leaders and inspired student volunteers packed wish list toys for Ronald McDonald House.



Event media created by Peer Leaders





South Woods Peer Leaders: Passion & Promise



What happens when a promising student teacher, Connor Phelan, connects with students through his energy and enthusiasm?

When students learned that "Mr. P's" brother was a hero, **South Woods Peer Leaders were inspired to help pursue his promise.**

Corey's Promise was created when Corey was hospitalized and witnessed the hardships of families with children who have cancer. His goal was to provide support so families could focus on their child's health.



Mr. P and Peer Leaders teach students about Corey's Promise

Peer Leaders championed initiatives such as accessible athletic competitions for **Corey's Promise**, which supports families of children with pediatric cancer. The club's vision includes:

- **Building understanding of why helping these families is important.**
- **Inspiring service projects that bring students together and make a difference.**



Making new friends at the Corey's Promise badminton tournament

SW Peer Leaders: Fostering Relationships Through Service



Chase R. - Grade 8:

“Peer Leaders club helps me feel more connected to my community. The activities that we organized and participated in have made a positive difference in me and also make the world a better place.”

Demi S. - Grade 8:

“Peer Leaders Club has given me a sense of belonging and has helped me create a true sense of self that is motivating me for everything that I do. Giving back not only betters myself, but makes a positive impact on our community as a whole.

Peer Leaders is a safe place to share and create ideas together with other peers. It makes me feel like I did something right when I know that I have helped others.

-Hannah A. - Grade 6



SYOSSET HIGH SCHOOL: FROM PARTICIPATION TO PURPOSE



What this looks like at the High School

- Through Voice, Choice & Agency, the student journey is marked by moving from discover to civic action.
- We emphasize a dual focus, where individual achievement is linked to community well-being.
- Students are empowered to reach their full potential by recognizing their capacity to influence the lives of others.



Discovery

Students identify their unique roles and interests within their immediate community context.



Building

Actively participating in and creating structures that foster community connection and strength.



Giving Back

Broadening the definition of community to include sustained civic action and service.

BREAKING BORDERS & MILL NECK MANOR SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



2015: 6 Students / 2 Schools
2026: 12 Schools *and growing*

Presenting on behalf of Breaking Borders:
Max Schoenberg, *Club Co-President*
Ryan Niewender, *ASL Teacher*

BREAKING BORDERS & MILL NECK MANOR SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



Click image to play video!



DAY OF SERVICE: Becoming a Changemaker



Background: Inspired by similar events in the local community, the day of service is an opportunity for students to engage in meaningful community service at school.

Impact (2026 Data):

- 16 decorations for nursing homes
- 28 cards for hospitalized kids
- 35 keychains for women's shelters
- 68 cat toys for animal shelter.

84.8% report the event made them feel closer to the community

97% report feeling more likely to engage in community service after the event.



Future Plans: The project is currently being expanded to the middle schools with the goal of becoming a districtwide initiative.

Elementary School

Middle School

High School

The mission of the Syosset Central School District is to prepare students to thrive in both the future we imagine and one which may evolve in ways yet to be envisioned.

Thank you!

