

Superintendent's Update

February 2024

Dear Rye Neck Families,

We are in full mid-year stride at Rye Neck. Winter clubs at Daniel Warren and FE Bellows are underway, our MS and HS athletes are in their winter seasons, and our seniors are in their last academic marking period before their internships begin. We also have other events and activities to look forward to. The “100th Day” of the school year on February 12th is a big deal at Daniel Warren, 4th graders are preparing for their concert, 8th graders are picking elective courses for next year, and four RNHS performances of *Beauty and the Beast* are set for the end of the month. Of course, we have another week off in two weeks!



Rye Neck Strategic Plan

Last month I told you about the formation of “Action Plan Teams” to continue our Strategic Planning Process. Building on the work of our original November planning team comprising a broad stakeholder group and equipped with survey data from parents, teachers, and students, the Action Plan Teams have been busy.

First, they put the finishing touches on each of the three goals we created at the end of November. We are excited that these are to be the focus for our school community going into the 2024-25 school and year and beyond, enabling our students to thrive academically and personally. **Rye Neck will:**

- Equip all learners to approach problems by asking questions, exploring solutions, taking action, and reflecting on outcomes
- Build transformative environments that foster empathy, compassion, and connection to the world. Create learning experiences that instill a sense of purpose inside and outside of the classroom
- Design systems for our professional learning community to develop practices and expertise that lead to transformational experiences for themselves and their students

Guided by our consultant, Judy Wilson, the Action Plan Teams have begun to answer the question “What do we have to do to achieve the goal?” Each team is co-chaired by one administrator and one staff member and further filled out by volunteers from all four schools. The overall aim is to have the Strategic Plan in place and ready for implementation by July 1st of this year. Who is doing this work? The Action Step Teams are:

Goal: Equip all learners to approach problems...

Co-chairs: Melinda Folchetti (Interim HS Principal), Kristina Schlote (MS/HS Special Ed.)

- Meghan Hyland (HS English)
- Kris Karam (HS Language)
- Leigh Ann Kowalchick (DW Librarian)
- Jessica Salierno (FEB grade 5)

Goal: Build transformative environments...

Co-chairs- Wil Siegel (Director of Pupil Personnel Services), Brian Pinto (DW grade 2)

- Elisa Barilli (MS Psychologist)
- Michelle Bowman (DW Psychologist)
- Jessica Cuevas (HS Counselor)
- Meegan Lawlor (MS Counselor)
- Allison Reynolds (MS Math)

Goal: Design systems for our professional learning...

Co-chairs: Tara Goldberg (DW Principal), Linette Milo (HS Science)

- Lindsay Baer-Noymer (FEB Special Ed.)
- Tara Linehan (DW grade 2)
- Sara Silverstein (MS Science)
- Shawn Tedrow (HS Social Studies)

As we progress from winter into spring, the teams will be soliciting input from our students, parents, and fellow staff members. We will continue to use Board of Education meetings, school communications, and PAC meetings to keep our parents informed of our progress.

ESS

The rescheduled date (due to poor weather in January) for the Effective Schools Solutions parent workshop “Supporting Students with Stress and Excessive Worry” is Tuesday, February 13th at 9:30 a.m. Please RSVP [here](#) if you would like to attend.

Bridges Program

Mr. Ivan Martinez, Rye Neck alumni and current ENL teacher, has been looking for ways to effectively support our students, particularly our new SIFE students. These are **E**nglish as a **N**ew **L**anguage, **S**tudents with **I**nterrupted **F**ormal **E**ducation students, meaning they have two or more years of formal education gaps. These students have limited literacy skills in any language, including their home language, which poses substantial challenges for teachers. Recognizing the importance of understanding and addressing the needs of SIFE students, Mr. Martinez reached out to a colleague on Long Island with a significant population of SIFE students in their district. He visited that school in the fall of 2022 to observe what an ENL/ELA and ENL Stand-Alone Bridges class looked like. He was inspired by what he observed and advocated adopting the Bridges

program at Rye Neck. Fortunately, we were able to successfully launch the Bridges program in the high school by the start of the second semester of last year thanks to our dynamic ENL team.

Bridges to Academic Success is a CUNY-based program of specialists in linguistics, educators, administrative leadership, educational psychology, and public health, most of whom have had teaching careers in New York. In addition to the primary staff, Bridges has partnered with various lead teachers throughout New York State, who provide feedback on curricula design and implementation. Their main mission is to advocate for newly arrived immigrants with developing literacy by providing educators with curriculum, resources, and training. Bridges offers several curriculums to help SIFE students develop literacy.

At Rye Neck, we've adopted the ENL/ELA, ENL Stand-Alone, and Math curriculums to support our students.

- *ENL/ELA Bridges* is a double-period class where students build their English proficiency through engaging texts that are above their reading level, as well as building their academic language, thinking, and literacy skills. Students see how people, despite facing adversity, use their resources to positively impact their lives, communities, and the world around them and then write mock letters to one of the individuals they admire.
- *ENL Stand-Alone* is quite different. It is a center-base course, meaning students are rotating to different stations such as group reading and writing, independent reading, independent writing, and foundational skills (phonics & power words). This course is designed to help students develop their foundational skills through reading and writing, while also focusing on the other two domains, speaking and listening.
- Lastly, the math is split into *Foundational* and *Math for SIFE students*. The foundational math curriculum is focused on teaching students to connect math with their everyday lives. Here, the students are taught basic numeracy skills using four operations, all while including problem-solving strategies. Math for SIFE students is a guided approach where students are pre-assessed to measure their knowledge and skill for the specific unit. Then, similar to ENL Stand-Alone, students work from centers, including independent practice, problem solving, vocabulary building, and teacher-led mini-lessons on fractions, integers, decimals, equations, rates, ratios, and much more.

Bridges to Academic Success has been an excellent and valuable resource during the last two years, aiding our SIFE students in enhancing their English proficiency. Mr. Martinez considers it a privilege getting to know the individuals behind this program during professional learning and office hours. Nevertheless, as we navigate through the latter half of the academic school year, he hopes that students will feel increasingly confident and comfortable using what they have learned and applying it to their other classes and everyday lives. Despite the unpredictability that comes with new students with different SIFE backgrounds joining our community, it is reassuring to know that our ENL department has a plan ready for implementation when needed. Through Bridges and with the cooperation of their colleagues, our passionate ENL staff can aid our new students, enabling them to assimilate into their new school, community, and life.

Student Spotlight

In each monthly message, we spotlight high school students who are doing interesting things in or out of school. Based on the relationships our staff members forge with their students and their knowledge of what's going on in their lives, our teachers suggest students for consideration. Mary Lanza, our Director of Technology and Communications, then interviews the students to "get their

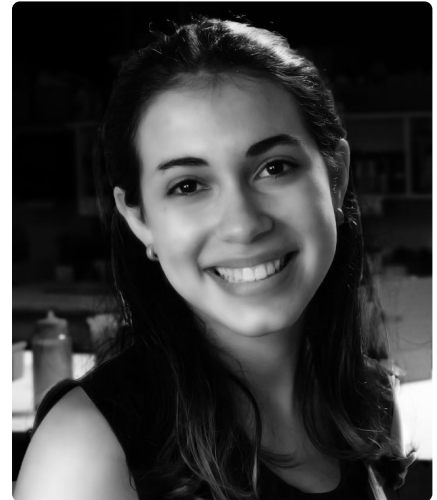
story.” Here are two students for February. **To read about the students, click on the name below their picture.**



[ALEX KERR](#)



[BEAUTY AND THE BEAST](#)



[MYLI BRUNO](#)

Staff Spotlight

We also highlight teachers and other staff members each month. Each shares personal reflections on how they got into education, memories from their time as students, and their favorite activities outside of school. These are our February spotlights. **To read about a staff member, click on the name below their picture.**



MICHELLE BOWMAN

Daniel Warren



LINDSAY BAER-NOYMER

F.E. Bellows



ELISA BARILLI

Middle School



MEGHAN HYLAND

High School

upcoming

EVENTS

SEAC Meeting

Tuesday, February 6

7:00 PM

MS/HS Community Room

Grades 3-5 Principal's Conversation

Thursday, February 8

9:30 AM

F.E. Bellows Cafeteria

PTSA Parents' Night Out

Saturday, February 10

7:00 PM

Mamaroneck Beach & Yacht Club

Booster Club Meeting

Monday, February 12

7:30 PM

MS/HS Library

ESS Parent Workshop: Supporting Students with Worry and Stress

Tuesday, February 13th

9:30 AM - VIRTUAL

Board of Education Meeting/First Budget Presentation

Wednesday, February 14

7:00 PM

MS/HS Community Room

RNIC Meeting

Thursday, February 15

9:15 AM

F.E. Bellows Annex

School Closed - Winter Recess

Monday, February 19 - Friday, February 23

PTSA/DW Book Drive Begins

Monday, February 26 - Friday, March 15

Drop Off at Daniel Warren

Board of Education Planning Session

Wednesday, February 28

6:30 PM

Collaborative Science Center

HS Winter Musical - *Beauty and the Beast*

Thursday, February 29 - 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 2 - 1 PM & 7 PM
MS/HS Performing Arts Center



Rye Neck Schools

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Twitter: [@ryeneckschools](https://twitter.com/ryeneckschools)



Rye Neck Schools