

Superintendent's Update

April 2024

Dear Rye Neck Families,

Eclipse on Monday, April 8th

The 2024 solar eclipse will occur on Monday, April 8th. This is both an exciting event and a time for caution. Although it may be tempting to look at the eclipse, even though the sun will be partially obscured by the moon, it's still the sun: you should never look directly at the sun, whether whole or in part.



According to NASA's [Eclipse Explorer](#), the eclipse will be visible from Rye Neck in the afternoon between approximately 2:10 and 4:30, with the maximum eclipse of 90% at around 3:20. That information from the NASA site was current this afternoon. It is expected to get dark to the level of twilight around 3:20 and there may be increased traffic in the area. To address the eclipse:

- We ordered and received [ISO 12312-2](#)-standard glasses, approved by the American National Standards Institute for all district students and staff. These will be distributed on April 8th. It is important to note that these glasses are only for viewing the eclipse itself: they are too dark for any other activity, such as walking or driving.
- Students will receive education on the eclipse and how to protect themselves in the days preceding the eclipse.
- Our athletic schedules will be modified. Intramurals and Modified practices are canceled for the day. JV and Varsity teams will be indoors until 4:30 and any games or matches will not begin until 5:00.
- **We are staggering our dismissal times by a few minutes at each building as we occasionally have for inclement weather or safety drills. We encourage students to be picked up by car as opposed to walking or biking, so we will alleviate traffic congestion by following this dismissal schedule on the afternoon of April 8th:**
 - Grade K - 2:30 (plus siblings in grades 1 and 2 with the K student)
 - Grades 1 and 2 - 2:45 (with siblings together with the 1st grader)
 - Grade 3 - 3:00 (plus siblings in grades 4 and 5)
 - Grades 4 and 5 - 3:05
 - Grades 6, 11, and 12 - 2:30
 - Grades 7 and 10 - 2:35
 - Grades 8 and 9 - 2:40

We will send reminders about the staggered dismissal prior to Monday the 8th.

Rye Neck Strategic Plan

I had been talking with Judy Wilson, our strategic planning consultant, and she made reference to a book series written by Kobi Yamada and illustrated by Mae Besom. She found the messages in these children's books to be inspirational and often aligned to parts of our strategic planning process. I was intrigued and did some reading.

The first in the trilogy is *What Do You Do With An Idea?* Our ideas have a growth cycle all their own. When they arrive, we are often unsure at first; we are sometimes afraid of what other people will say; eventually we take ownership of the idea; we discover that they need a lot of attention; they grow in unexpected ways; and our ideas encourage us to think big.

As Rye Neck moves through our Action Plan phase this spring to address our Strategic Plan goals, we will be embracing new ideas so that they can grow and encourage our students, staff, and community to "think big". Our goals and new mission statement, seen below, can also be found on our website. We will provide updates regarding how our Action Plans will empower our students to be successful both as individuals and as part of a community.

Goals

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.

Our Mission

Rye Neck is a close-knit school community that values local and global voices. We are committed to providing a learning journey that inspires an adaptive mindset and enables all learners to thrive academically and personally.

The Importance of NY State 3-8 Assessments

Our grades 3 through 8 New York State English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments are coming soon. The ELA exams are scheduled for April 10th and 11th while the math exams are scheduled for May 7th and 8th. All testing is done during the first two or three periods of the day in both buildings. However, the tests are untimed: as long as students are productively working, they may keep working. We are still using traditional paper and pencil tests for grade 3 and 4, but beginning this spring, grades 5-8 will be computer-based for both ELA and math.

There are important reasons for our students to take these assessments. Primarily, they gauge how well districts do as a whole regarding instruction on NY State standards and assist in directing measures to improve students' mastery of the standards. They are not "graded" in the sense that students are not penalized for any particular score. The data received from the state assessments is analyzed to meet students' needs and inform instruction to improve their skills.

While New York State has future plans on using more project-based assessments, the type of assessments our students currently take are not changing anytime soon.

While students are not penalized for not taking the tests, Rye Neck is. Any district that does not meet the minimum 95% participation rate for each grade level and test will have a negative rating on the New York State accountability reports in the participation category. Additionally, non-tested students negatively affect Rye Neck's proficiency category on the New York State accountability reports.

Assessments are an important part of our K-12 process and beyond. In this case, the state tests give us data to ensure that our students are prepared for the credit-bearing coursework that will allow them to earn a diploma and achieve their personal goals.

Budget, Capital Proposal, and Trustee Vote

The big date to remember this year is Tuesday, May 21st, the annual voting day for both our 2024-25 district operating budget and our Board of Education trustee election. In addition to the annual budget, the community will have the opportunity to vote on the use of our Capital Reserve Fund to address elements of the building condition survey identified by our district architects as needing attention at our September Board of Education meeting. Although use of the Capital Reserve Fund does not require any further levying of taxes, voter authorization is required to use the fund for project work.

Our next budget presentation is on Wednesday, April 17th at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS Community Room, followed by a final budget hearing on May 8th at 9:00 AM at Daniel Warren. In addition to these opportunities, all budget information is available by clicking [Budget 2024-2025](#) under the "Our District" tab on our website.

Each year there are two Board of Education seats open for full three-year terms. This year, the current three-year terms of Board members Rebecca Mansell and Patty Nashelsky will expire. Candidates seeking to become a Board of Education member must be nominated by petition. Candidates should contact District Clerk Mary Ellen Chiera at mchiera@ryeneck.org or 914-777-5252 to obtain the petition and any other required materials. Each petition shall be filed with the District Clerk not later than 4:00 PM on April 22, 2024.

Staff Spotlight

We also like to 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. Our April spotlights feature some of the leaders of our teachers' association. **To read about a staff member, click on the name below their picture.**



CONNIE LEVIN

Daniel Warren



JANICE TOSI

F.E. Bellows



MATT MAGNANI

Middle School

Teacher?
I prefer
the term
Educational
Rockstar



SHELLEY SWICK

High School

upcoming
EVENTS

Board of Education Planning Session

Wednesday, April 3

6:30 PM

K-2 Principal's Conversation

Friday, April 5th

9:15 AM

DW Auditorium

Booster Club Meeting

Monday, April 8th

7:30 PM

MS/HS Dining Hall

SEAC Meeting

Tuesday, April 9th

7:00 PM

MS/HS Community Room

Grs. 3-8 NYS ELA Exam

Wednesday & Thursday, April 10th & 11th

HS Research Symposium

Wednesday, April 10th

6:00 PM

Collaborative Science Center

Daniel Warren Wake Up the Garden

Thursday, April 11th

3:00 PM

Orientation for Parents of Incoming 6th Graders

Thursday, April 11th

6:00 PM

MS/HS Performing Arts Center

RNIC Meeting

Friday, April 12th

9:15 AM

FEB Annex

Panther Palooza Track Invitational

Saturday, April 13th

MS/HS Campus

PTSA DW & FEB Walk to School Week

Monday - Friday, April 15th - 19th

Board of Education Meeting/Third Budget Presentation/Adoption of Budget

Wednesday, April 17th

7:00 PM

PTSA FEB Family Kickball Night

Thursday, April 18th

5:30 PM

F.E. Bellows

HS Spring Concert

Thursday, April 18th

7:00 PM

MS/HS Performing Arts Center

1st Gr. Earth Day Concert

Friday, April 19th

2:00 PM

DW Auditorium

NO SCHOOL - Holiday Recess

Monday & Tuesday, April 22nd & 23rd

PTSA Fun Run & Panther Party

Saturday, April 27th



Rye Neck Schools

Email: info@ryeneck.org

Website: www.ryeneck.org

Phone: [914-777-5200](tel:914-777-5200)

Facebook: facebook.com/ryeneckschools

Instagram: [@ryeneckschools](https://instagram.com/ryeneckschools)

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



Rye Neck Schools