



Over 60 Years of Service

Forum

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 8 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS AUG. 12

JULY 10 VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS AUG. 14

JULY 14 DASA WORKSHOPS AUG. 11

AUG. 13 ANNUAL NEW BOARD MEMBERS/SUPERINTENDENTS DINNER/CLAM BAKE

Awards Dinner a Resounding Success

Dear Readers,

The 24th annual SCOPE Education Services School District Awards Dinner took place on March 24 at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook. Once again, public school districts from Nassau and Suffolk counties came together to honor individuals who have demonstrated exceptional service in the categories of Community Service, School Administrators, School Board Service, Support Staff, and Teachers.

This year, 61 school districts recognized a total of 172 outstanding individuals. The event was attended by 850 guests, all gathered to celebrate the extraordinary dedication and impact these honorees have had on their school communities.

Each individual recognized was nominated by his or her district for going above and beyond in their efforts to support students and the communities in which they work and live. Honorees were invited to attend the dinner with a guest, free of charge, and each received a commemorative plaque along with a feature in the event program. I had the distinct pleasure of presenting the awards, as families, friends and colleagues applauded, took photos and celebrated each recipient's remarkable achievements.

Joining me in the presentations were:

- Dr. Joseph Famularo, past president of the SCOPE Board of Directors and superintendent of the Bellmore School District.
- Mr. Lars Clemensen, immediate past president of the Board and superintendent of the Hampton Bays School District.
- Dr. Lorna Lewis, president of the SCOPE Board of Directors and superintendent of the Malverne School District.
- Dr. Yiendhy Farrelly, treasurer of the Board and superintendent of the West Babylon School District.
- Dr. Ken Bossert, vice president of the Board and superintendent of the Great Neck School District.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our many sponsors, especially our Platinum Sponsors: BBS Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers; the law firms of Guercio & Guercio LLP and Ingerman Smith LLP; and the Teachers Federal Credit Union. Without their generous support, this celebration would not be possible. A full list of sponsors can be found in this edition of The Forum.

I was also honored to present the National School

Development Council's Cooperative Leadership Award to the Honorable Regent Roger Tilles. Regent Tilles has a long and distinguished career in education and public service. A graduate of Amherst College (1968) and the University of Michigan Law School (1971), he has served in numerous roles, including director of law and legislation for the Michigan Department of Education, member of the Michigan State Board of Education, and executive secretary to the speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives.

In addition to teaching education law at several Michigan universities, he has served as counsel to the Michigan Teacher Tenure Commission and as a special education hearing officer. After running for U.S. Congress, he practiced law in Washington, D.C., before returning to Long Island in 1983. He has since played a pivotal role in several organizations, including Long Island University, the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, the Tilles Investment Companies, WLIW/Channel 21 and WNET/Channel 13. He also helped establish the Long Island Arts Alliance, uniting cultural institutions across the region.

Regent Tilles was elected in 2005 as Regent for the 10th Judicial District and has proudly represented Long Island for the past 20 years, tirelessly advocating for the children of Long Island and New York State.

I was also privileged to introduce the newly elected member of the New York State Board of Regents, the Honorable Felicia Thomas-Williams. After a long and distinguished career in education, Regent Thomas-Williams will now represent Long Island.

I extend my deepest thanks to the dedicated SCOPE staff, especially Ann Nuzzo and Christine Cosme, for their countless hours of planning and coordination to ensure the success of this memorable evening.

Congratulations to all of this year's honorees, and thank you for your incredible contributions to making Long Island's school districts among the best in the nation. This edition of The Forum is dedicated to you and your many accomplishments.

Wishing each of you a warm, relaxing and healthy summer!

Sincerely,

George L. Duffy – Executive Director/CEO

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



GEORGE L. DUFFY

"SCOPE Education Services, a not-for-profit organization currently celebrating our 60th year, is permanently chartered by the New York State Board of Regents to provide services to public-school districts on Long Island and in New York State."

George L. Duffy, Executive Director/CEO

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Annual School District Awards Dinner

RECOGNIZES EXTRAORDINARY WORK

Excitement filled the grand ballroom at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook during the 24th annual SCOPE School District Awards Dinner, held on March 24. The annual event was part of SCOPE's celebration of more than 60 years of serving children and their families and an opportunity to recognize 172 individuals for their extraordinary contributions and dedication during the 2024-2025 school year.

In his welcoming remarks, SCOPE Executive Director/CEO George Duffy thanked school districts, guests and the honorees whose services have greatly benefited students across Long Island and for addressing the challenges that students face each day.

"Thanks for what you do for the children of Long Island," Mr. Duffy said.

Honorees were acknowledged in the categories of Community Service, School Administrator Service, School Board Service, Support Staff Service and Teacher Service.

MR. Duffy and SCOPE Board of Directors President Lorna R. Lewis presented New York State



At-Large Regent Roger Tilles with the National School Development Council's Cooperative Leadership Award for his exemplary educational advocacy. Felicia Thomas-Williams, who now replaces Mr. Tilles on the Regents Board, was also introduced.

Additionally, Mr. Duffy and SCOPE board members individually acknowledged the platinum-, gold-, silver- and bronze-level sponsors and honorees in each of the categories, as they were called on stage to receive their plaques.



SCOPE Board of Directors President Lorna R. Lewis and Executive Director George Duffy recognized New York State Regent Roger Tilles.

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SCOPE Celebrates Anniversary

With Scholarship Awards

In honor of its 60th anniversary and to recognize the people who are the heart and soul of the organization, SCOPE Education Services awarded two dozen scholarships to staff and their families. The scholarship presentation took place at Nesaquake Middle School in the Smithtown School District on April 8.

Scholarship candidates included active SCOPE employees who work at least 10 months during the school year or an employee's spouse, child or grandchild. They also must be planning to attend a two-year college, four-year college or recognized trade school in the 2025-2026 school year.

This year's recipients were Enayatullah Ali, Amanda Arcese, Claudia Bragg, Sophie Campagnola, Brianna Cerna, James Curan, Erica DeSimone, Kaylee Diaz, Valentina Escobar, Valeria Gamboa, Hailey Goldenberg, Isis James, Elaine Meyer, Juliana Mendes, Taylor Mercado, Kevin Nosek, Jesse Ortiz II, Dylan Piccione, Dulce Rivera, Andrea Rodriguez, Talia Schandel, Laci Scofield, William Stebner and Aidan Szentmariay.

Dr. John Stimmel, deputy director of SCOPE, spoke about the history of the non-



profit organization, which has been serving public school districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties since 1964 and is permanently chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. He explained that the purpose of the scholarships was to invest in the future of individuals who are part of the SCOPE family.

"Each of the honorees stood out in a competitive pool of applicants," Dr. Stimmel said. "The committee was deeply impressed by what they saw – young leaders and future professionals who have already shown exceptional commitment, compassion and leadership. These qualities they demonstrate are not just nice to have, they are essential in



today's world."

There were more than 100 applicants, with each telling a story of dedication, hope and ambition in his or her application packet, Executive Director/CEO George Duffy noted. He also explained the significance of the scholarship amount – each of the 24 recipients received \$2,500, for a total of \$60,000, an homage to SCOPE's 60th anniversary.

"This isn't just a number, it's a symbol," Mr. Duffy said. "It's \$1,000 for every year of service, every year of heart, every year of impact. As we reflected on how best to honor this anniversary, our Board of Directors had a vision – to invest in the very people who make SCOPE special."



NEWS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS



COPIAGUE

Senior Named QuestBridge Scholar

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School senior Yoervin Espinal Francisco was named a 2025 QuestBridge Scholar. Espinal Francisco has been matched with Boston University where he will study electrical engineering this coming fall. Espinal Francisco is ranked fifth in his class with a GPA of 102.81 and has been recognized for his devotion to learning through his AP Scholar with Distinction Award and AP Capstone Diploma.



SAYVILLE

Elementary School Launches Unique Recycling Initiative

Sunrise Drive Elementary School recently became the only TerraCycle-approved drop-off location for Honest Juice pouch recycling on Long Island. The school's latest green initiative, led by STEAM teacher Jenn Horton and certified sustainable librarian Kelsey LaPort, aims to help the community recycle traditionally hard-to-recycle items. When students discovered their favorite snack packaging – like Go-Go Squeeze tubes, Little Bites wrappers and Takis bags – was difficult to recycle, the school partnered with TerraCycle, a global leader in recycling innovation. Sunrise Drive has already collected more than five pounds of Little Bites wrappers through this student-driven initiative.



SEAFORD

Secondary Students Make An Interschool Wellness Connection

Students from Seaford High School visited seventh grade health classes at the middle school on March 28. They prepared digital presentations and activities on topics such as healthy eating, exercise, bullying and cyberbullying, time management and vaping. The initiative was spurred by the high school's Wellness Committee, which sought student volunteers who would be willing to present on relatable health topics for their younger peers.

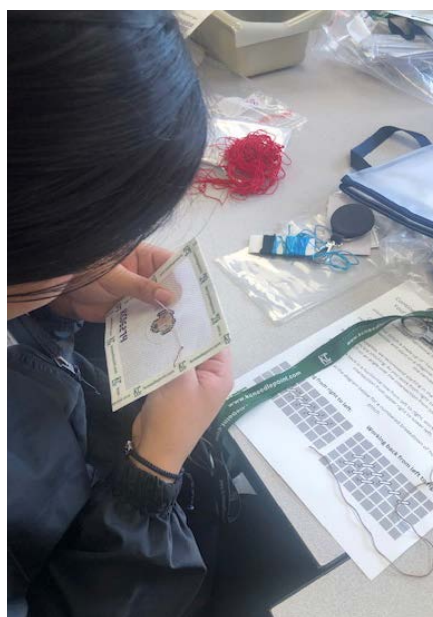
LONGWOOD

RoboLions Team 564 Advances to World Championship

Longwood High School's RoboLions Team 564 had an outstanding performance at the FIRST Long Island Regional competition at Hofstra University, securing the regional championship. In addition, the RoboLions earned the prestigious Impact Award, the highest honor of the event, which qualifies them for the world championships in Hous-



ton. The esteemed award recognizes teams that demonstrate sustained excellence, meaningful community outreach and a strong commitment to promoting STEM and the mission of FIRST.



SOUTHAMPTON

Grant Brings Needlepoint Program

Southampton Intermediate School eighth grade family and consumer sciences students learned the art of needlepoint thanks to a \$500 needlepointing, fiber and agriculture grant from the National Agriculture in the Classroom organization. Students learned about the properties, versatility, life cycle and value of cotton and gained insight into what can be created using cotton. For the hands-on component, the eighth graders made lavender sachets and needlepoint projects using cotton thread and cotton fabrics.



PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE

Community Supports Homeless Teens Through Power of Belongings Event

The Plainview-Old Bethpage community came together for the second annual Power of Belongings event, supporting Long Island teens in homeless shelters or foster care. With support and donations from local organizations and donors, volunteers filled 400 duffel bags with sweatshirts, headphones, chargers and toiletries. These bags, distributed by Birthday Wishes of Long Island, help teens in temporary living situations feel a sense of belonging and ownership. Guest speaker Regina Calcaterra, author of the New York Times bestseller, "Etched in Sand," inspired attendees with her story of resilience throughout her experience with the Long Island foster care system and the power of community support.



CONNETQUOT

School Unveils Serenity Space

Edward J. Bosti Elementary School has officially opened its new Serenity Space, a room designed to help students manage stress, practice mindfulness and support emotional wellness. The room is packed with comforting and sensory-friendly items, including bean bag chairs, weighted blankets, oversized plush toys and a cozy tent. The soothing ambiance is enhanced by a galaxy light projector, sound machine, lava lamp, LED bubble tube, sound bowl, chime and more. Students can also engage with hands-on toys and tools like a puzzle pillow, Zen Garden, squishy toys, books, a drawing board and a sensory sequin wall panel.



opportunities from cosmetology, nursing and robotics to politics, the military and law enforcement.

ELWOOD

An Incredible Second Career Day

Elwood-John H. Glenn High School's second annual Career Day was an incredible success. The school partnered with the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office to organize the event, held in the gym, cafeteria and hallway. Students took part in hands-on activities, learned from leaders in their fields and were exposed to numerous future career

NEWS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS



SMITHTOWN

Senior Donates to Cancer Center

Matthew Gandarillas, a senior at Smithtown High School East, recently walked into the Stony Brook Cancer Center and donated more than \$1,000 worth of gift cards and toys for children suffering from cancer. Gandarillas, who is a part of the National, Math and Spanish honor societies as well as a member of the varsity soccer team, spearheaded a pediatric cancer drive on his own, because it is an issue very close to him and his family: Gandarillas is a cancer survivor, himself.



BALDWIN

High School Hosts Future Careers Think Tank

Baldwin High School recently hosted an innovative initiative, where students presented futuristic career ideas, such as a Neurocloud Engineer or a Virtual Habitat Designer. Their “Shark Tank”-style presentations were evaluated by a panel of judges. Prior to their futuristic career pitches, the students conducted extensive research to support their proposed professions based on future market demands, trends and salaries. The winning team was then recognized for their forward-thinking concept with a certificate and photo opportunity. This unique project was part of the students’ curriculum and highlighted the district’s commitment to preparing students for future careers by fostering the six C’s of education.



RIVERHEAD

Students Explore Legal Careers

Riverhead High School students in the school’s Criminal Justice course and Women’s Empowerment club attended an inspiring event at the John P. Cohalan Jr. Court Complex at the Suffolk County District Court in Central Islip. Led by Class of 2003 alumnus Kera Reed, the event featured a panel of legal professionals who shared their experiences, encouraged students to fulfill their potential, and showcased the power of diversity in law. The discussion also highlighted the importance of women in the legal field and maintaining a work-life balance.



SHOREHAM-WADING RIVER

New Coding Challenges for Miller Avenue Students

Miller Avenue School students in grades K-2 learned exciting new coding challenges using Indi robot vehicles. Library media specialist Brittany LaValle and Eastern Suffolk BOCES Model School coach Carrie McGuire worked with the students in the library to supplement their computer science skills. The engaging activity challenged the young scientists to complete a code sequence to create a square path around a classmate and – at a more advanced level – to complete a code sequence to create an infinite loop.

OYSTER BAY-EAST NORWICH

High School Musicians Learn From Renowned Composer

Renowned composer and violist Jessica Meyer recently visited Oyster Bay High School for a workshop with student musicians. As part of a five-school collaboration, OBHS is co-commissioning Meyer’s original piece, “From City to Shore,” inspired by Long Island’s landscape. Students participated in a question-and-



answer session and rehearsal with Meyer, gaining insight into her creative process. The piece debuts at the high school’s spring concert, highlighting the power of collaboration in music education.



THREE VILLAGE

ASL Students Share Stories With Elementary Schools

Ward Melville High School’s Level 3 American Sign Language students recently brought their learning to life in a meaningful way by sharing their storytelling skills with second graders. As part of a special project, they created original books and visited Minnesauke, Nassakeag and Setauket elementary schools to read stories in ASL. This experience allowed the high school students to practice and showcase their ASL skills while introducing younger minds to the beauty and expressive nature of sign language.



DEER PARK

Culinary Program Grows By Leaps and Bounds

Participation in Deer Park’s culinary arts program has tripled in three years to 60 students, along with expanded course complexity. The growth has been led by teacher Suzanne Long, an accomplished chef and culinary educator. In the introductory course, students learn kitchen safety and sanitation, measurements, knife cuts and basic culinary techniques. In the second, they learn more advanced techniques such as braising and protein cookery.



UNIONDALE

District Hosts LI Classic Debate Tournament

The Uniondale social studies department and debate club recently hosted the prestigious Long Island Classic debate tournament, sponsored by the American Debate League, at Uniondale High School. More than 650 student debaters from Long Island, New York City and Westchester competed at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Uniondale tallied nine individual speaker awards and six team awards across grade levels, with Walnut Street School winning first place in the beginner yellow division.

NEW HYDE PARK-GARDEN CITY PARK

National Financial Literacy Month Enrichment Program

To celebrate National Financial Literacy Month and provide fun and informative after-school enrichment, New Hyde Park-Garden City Park Union Free School District hosted a Financial Literacy Family Fun event at Manor Oaks School. District students were invited to attend with a family

member and complete six stations to receive a homework pass. Additionally, students received firsthand tips and knowledge from representatives from FourLeaf Federal Credit Union. At their station, they taught students and their families about banking and what is offered at their credit union.



Congratulations Are in Order

APPOINTMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLORAL PARK-BELLEROSE Superintendent of Schools

The Floral Park-Bellerose Board of Education has appointed Dr. Anthony Lubrano as the next superintendent of schools, effective July 1. A seasoned administrator with more than 25 years of educational experience, Dr. Lubrano comes from the Hicksville School District.



Dr. Lubrano began his career in education as a literacy teacher for the New York City Department of Education and a reading teacher in the West Islip School District. He has served in various building-level administrative capacities, including as an elementary school principal and an assistant principal for more than a decade.

MALVERNE Superintendent of Schools to Retire

After more than 45 years in the education field, with the last five serving at the helm of Malverne Union Free School District, Dr. Lorna Lewis has announced her retirement, effective July 1.

Dr. Lewis began her career teaching mathematics and Advanced Placement physics at the Collegiate School in New York City. She then served in various administrative capacities, including as science chair in Rockville Centre, science director in Uniondale, deputy superintendent in Three Village and superintendent in East Williston and Plainview-Old Bethpage. Additionally, Dr. Lewis has been an adjunct professor at Hofstra University, where she was the instructor of graduate science methods courses.

She was the first female person of color to serve as president of the New York Council of School Superintendents and has earned countless recognitions for her advocacy and leadership.



NORTHPORT-EAST NORTHPORT Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

The Northport-East Northport Union Free School District has appointed Dr. Candice Brodie as the new assistant superintendent for learning and teaching, effective July 1. Dr. Brodie comes from the Cold Spring Harbor School District where she served as the assistant superintendent for human resources. She earned a doctoral degree from St. John's University and post-master's advanced certificates in school building leadership and school district leadership from The College of Saint Rose.



CENTER MORICHES Superintendent of Schools

The Center Moriches School District Board of Education has formally appointed Dr. Ricardo Soto as the permanent superintendent of schools. Dr. Soto has served the district for 21 years, most recently as interim superintendent since August 2024, and previously as assistant superintendent for student services, personnel and instructional technology. He is widely recognized for his leadership in special education and his innovative, student-centered approach.



MERRICK Superintendent of Schools

The Merrick Board of Education announces that Diana Ketcham will serve as the next superintendent of schools, effective July 1. Ms. Ketcham will replace Dr. Dominick Palma, who is retiring at the end of the school year.



Ms. Ketcham joins Merrick from the Half Hollow Hills Central School District, where she has served as the assistant superintendent for elementary education since 2018. She began her career as an elementary teacher in the Babylon School District, then went on to serve as principal in both the Bayport-Blue Point and Hicksville school districts.

Superintendent of Schools to Retire

Dr. Dominick Palma is retiring as superintendent of schools of the Merrick School District as of June 30. His career included positions as a teaching assistant, school psychologist, preschool coordinator, director of special education and assistant superintendent for curriculum and student services.



For the last 13 years, he has led the Merrick Union Free School District. Dr. Palma is a past president of the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents. He continues to serve as an integral member of the organization's executive board, chairs the NCCSS Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee and is a member of its safety and legislative committees.



HALF HOLLOW HILLS Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education

The Half Hollow Hills Board of Education announces that Dr. Milton K. Strong has been appointed assistant superintendent of secondary education. A 1989 graduate of the district, Dr. Strong has been a dedicated leader in Half Hollow Hills for more than two decades, most recently serving as principal of High School East. His leadership in fostering student-centered learning and academic innovation has been instrumental in shaping the educational experience for students. He will assume his new role on July 1.

HEWLETT-WOODMERE Superintendent of Schools

Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools announces the appointment of Dr. Dina M. Anzalone as superintendent of schools, effective July 1. She will succeed Dr. Ralph Marino Jr., who is retiring after nearly a decade of leadership.

Dr. Anzalone has served the district for 18 years in various leadership roles, most recently as assistant superintendent of teaching, learning and technology.

She has led numerous districtwide initiatives, including curriculum innovation, professional development and technology integration. Her prior roles include principal of Ogden Elementary School and director of curriculum, assessment and instructional technology.



SOUTH COUNTRY Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

Jaclyn O'Hagan has been appointed the new assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and accountability for the South Country School District. She was also recently awarded the 2024-2025 Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor Award by the New York State Council for the Social Studies.

During her eight-year tenure as the district's director of humanities, Ms. O'Hagan has been committed to working closely with humanities educators and central and building administration to bolster learning opportunities for students.

Super Tuesday Is Over – What’s Next?

It was a good night for public education on Long Island on May 20, when the budget and trustee votes were held. All but two budgets were approved by the voting public, and by an average passing rate of 69%. In addition, most incumbents were successful in being reelected by their communities. These are very good signs that the voters are highly satisfied with the public education and governance teams on Long Island.

There are some concerns that we noted with the results. The first is voter turnout. Turnout dropped by 12% overall from the previous year. Except in districts that have multiple contested elections, turnout dropped, and this has been a trend that we have noted since the inception of the tax cap. Districts that stay within their tax cap have seen a lower turnout even though their margins of passage have increased. Voter apathy should be a concern for everyone, and voter turnout is something that most elected officials in various positions – local, state and federal – pay attention to because we

share the same constituents. The other trend we noted was a higher than usual rate of incumbents not seeking reelection.

Nearly 40% of the incumbents chose to retire from their board seats. The reasons, I’m sure, are varied; however, we will have many new board members at the table come July 1. We also have several new or newer superintendents in districts across Long Island.

This means there is a need and an opportunity for organizations like N-SSBA, the superintendents associations of Nassau and Suffolk counties and SCOPE to provide trainings and workshops on best practices to become high-functioning governance teams. The data is clear that high-functioning governance teams leads to high-achieving school districts.

So, what’s next? Look for these training opportunities and workshops either in person or online. Partner with a veteran board member who can be your mentor. We all had goals and aspirations about what we wanted to accomplish when we were

elected to a school board, so now learn how to become an effective member of a high-functioning governance team. We are the leaders of an educational system, so be a lifelong learner and take advantage of as many professional development opportunities as possible. This requires time and effort, but I can tell you from personal experience, if you want to be an effective board member who can help improve or change the trajectory of your district, put in the time to listen, learn and ask questions. N-SSBA is always here as resource for our governance teams because we want to continue the legacy of high-quality public education being delivered to the nearly 420,000 students on Long Island. Our main objectives are to serve, support and advocate for our membership.

To those who were newly elected, congratulations and welcome aboard. To those who were reelected, congratulations and thank you for continuing to serve. We look forward to working with you all of you and your teams in the future.

Bob Vecchio is executive director of the Nassau-Suffolk Schools Boards Association and host of the “Spotlight on Long Island Schools” radio show. He is a former Board of Education president in the William Floyd School District.

SCHOOL BOARDS SPOTLIGHT



BOB VECCHIO

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SPRING-SUMMER 2025

Forum



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