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**JANUARY 20
MARCH 5**

VIOLENCE PREVENTION
WORKSHOPS - ZOOM, 4-6 P.M.

**JANUARY 27
MARCH 10**

DASA WORKSHOPS

**JANUARY 7
MARCH 2**

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Empathy Is Transformative in Education

Dear Educators, Families and Community Members,

In our schools and in our homes, one of the most powerful forces for connection is empathy. As we continue our shared work to support every child's growth, success and well-being, it becomes increasingly clear that empathy is not simply a helpful trait; it is an essential cornerstone of effective leadership, meaningful teaching and healthy family relationships.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It requires us to listen with intention, to seek understanding before being understood, and to view the world through the eyes of students, colleagues, parents and children. When empathy guides our actions, we strengthen trust, deepen relationships and create environments where every individual feels valued and seen.

In the world of education, empathy is transformative. For school leaders, it nurtures positive school cultures, boosts staff morale and leads to wiser, more compassionate decisions. Teachers who embrace empathy build classrooms where students feel safe to learn, take risks and express themselves openly. Parents who model empathy help their children develop emotional strength, self-awareness and constructive communication skills. And when children learn empathy, they contribute to communities grounded in kindness, respect and inclusion.

There are many simple yet powerful ways we can weave empathy into our daily work and interactions: using stories to explore diverse perspectives, engaging

in reflective practices, creating space for restorative conversations and offering professional learning focused on active listening and emotional intelligence. These practices help us understand not just what people are experiencing, but why, and how we can support them authentically.

As we reflect on our roles within the wider educational community, I encourage each of us to pause and consider:

- How do we listen to and validate the feelings of those around us?
- How does empathy shape our decision-making, our teaching and our family interactions?
- What small, meaningful habits help us stay connected to the emotional climate of our classrooms, schools and homes?

Empathy is more than a skill; it is a commitment to fostering connection, compassion and community. When we embed empathy into our leadership, our instruction and our relationships, we strengthen the foundation of our

schools and pave the way for healthier, more inclusive environments where every individual can thrive.

Thank you to our educators for the extraordinary work you do each day on behalf of children and families. Together, through empathy and understanding, we continue to build a brighter and more connected educational future.

With appreciation and respect,

George L. Duffy, Executive Director

A Message from the Executive Director GEORGE L. DUFFY



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SCOPE Education Services, a not-for-profit organization, 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.

Before- and After-School Programs Filled With Thousands of Smiles a Day

Every school day across Long Island, more than 8,200 children begin and end their day with SCOPE Education Services. With 222 before- and after-school child-care programs across 45 school districts, each conveniently located in elementary schools, SCOPE creates spaces where children can laugh, learn and have fun. As the region's largest not-for-profit, school-based child-care provider, SCOPE is proud to offer reliable, high-quality programs that brighten each child's day while supporting the needs of working families.

More than just child care, SCOPE is an integral part of each school district's community, an environment where friendships flourish, confidence blossoms and every child feels connected. Parents have peace of mind knowing their children are not only safe but having a great time while they are at work. To meet the diverse needs of working families, SCOPE provides full- and part-time options, as well as scholarships and sibling discounts.

Safety is the top priority throughout all SCOPE programs. Each site is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, which requires adherence to regulations regarding supervision, staffing ratios, employee training, physical environments and emergency preparedness. SCOPE staff undergo extensive background checks, including fingerprinting and state clearance, before working with children. All employees complete 15 hours of mandatory training in CPR/First Aid, child abuse and maltreatment prevention, emergency procedures and behavior management. Ongoing professional development keeps staff informed of best practices and new guidelines in child safety and development.

Daily routines are designed with safety in mind,

sign-in and sign-out procedures with photo ID, regular attendance and health checks, and constant communication with school administrators. Emergency drills are conducted throughout the year, so staff and children are well-prepared for any unforeseen event. Program spaces are arranged to ensure safe supervision, with staff actively engaged and positioned so they can maintain oversight during all activities.

At SCOPE, we are more than child care; we are partners in each community. SCOPE works closely with school districts and families to ensure programs reflect the unique needs of the children they serve. What truly sets SCOPE apart is its warm, nurturing atmosphere, where dedicated and compassionate child care professionals greet every child with positivity and enthusiasm. Their goal is to make a meaningful difference in the life of every child.



Activities you will see at SCOPE Before- and After-School Programs:

- Homework Help: Dedicated quiet time with supportive staff who encourage children to complete assignments.
- Arts and Crafts: Hands-on projects that inspire creativity.
- Outdoor Play and Gym Time: Opportunities for movement, teamwork and healthy physical activity.
- Literacy Activities: Engaging language activities that build confidence and skills.
- STEM Projects: Hands-on exploration of science, technology, engineering and math.
- Snack Time: A moment to recharge, connect and enjoy a healthy snack.
- Special Presenters: Guests who bring excitement, learning and fun.
- Parties and Celebrations: Joyful moments that create lasting memories.

Through these experiences, children gain confidence, independence and have positive social connections with their friends, while parents benefit from the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are safe, engaged and cared for. With decades of experience and strong partnerships with school districts, SCOPE continues to be a trusted provider across Long Island, offering high-quality, reliable and enriching before- and after-school programs where children learn, play, thrive and smile!

Science World Brings Joy to Young Explorers in UPK

Science in the universal prekindergarten classrooms can be messy but also joyful and a sensory delight. SCOPE's UPK students learn science through touching, pouring, measuring and comparing. They learn to use magnifiers, flashlights, tweezers and balance scales. Exploring materials like sand, water, rocks, shells, seeds, leaves and magnets, they easily become mesmerized by the environment set up by their teacher.

Science shows up everywhere. It is built into centers where blocks are used as ramps for observations in stability and motion. Water tables serve as venues for learning about sinking and floating and volume and displacement. They learn about the mixing of colors

through art, and outdoor play brings attention to shadows, plant life and insects.

UPK children learn about observation ("What did you notice?"), prediction ("What do you think will happen?"), cause and effect ("If you push harder, what will happen?"), classification ("How can we sort these?") and comparing and measuring ("Which is longer? How do we know?"). Each week, small investigations pop up through common observations, and the language of science triggers thinking processes we sometimes take for granted. Vocabulary building, sequencing opportunities and problem-solving challenges surface every day in a classroom where the study of science is a focus.

What Young Scientists Do Every Day

- We ask questions: "What do you notice?" "What do you think will happen?"
- We experiment: We pour, mix, test, build and try again.
- We think: We make predictions, look for patterns and figure out cause and effect.
- We talk about our ideas: We share our thinking with friends, we use new words like "float," "heavy," "roll" and "change."
- We record our learning: We draw what we see, we take photos, we tell the teacher our ideas.
- We explore outdoors: We study weather, shadows, plants, bugs, rocks and water. Nature is our biggest science lab.
- We work together: We take turns, share tools and try different ideas. We learn from mistakes and celebrate discoveries.



Enrichment Brings INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY to Long Island Schools



As students across Long Island are engaged in the 2025-2026 school year, SCOPE Education Services has rolled out one of its most expansive enrichment seasons yet. An ambitious blend of before-school, after-school, Saturday and vacation programming reaches learners from prekindergarten through high school. SCOPE Enrichment has grown into a regional network spanning more than 40 districts, each participating in a shared mission to bring joyful, meaningful learning beyond the bell, from Valley Stream in the west to Oysterponds in Orient Point.

SCOPE's Every Day Monthly programs continue to expand as well, supporting K-6 and UPK classrooms throughout 18 Long Island districts. The daily after-school EDM program has doubled in size this year, with new partnering districts including East Moriches, Hauppauge, Merrick, North Merrick, South Huntington, Valley Stream and Wantagh. No matter which community, the goal remains the same – to provide high-quality and engaging learning environments where students explore new skills, strengthen confidence and discover what topics excite them most.

"We design each enrichment program to feel like something special," said Melissa Marra, SCOPE Enrichment curriculum writer and master educator from William Floyd Union Free School District. "We want students to visually see the impact of their learning and provide SCOPE Enrichment instructors with the curriculum, materials and tools they need for powerful and impactful programming."

In Melissa's spare time, she also teaches virtual middle and high school coding classes at night for SCOPE Enrichment.

Nowhere is that energy more visible than in SCOPE's winter-themed programs. In classrooms from Oysterponds to Franklin Square, young learners will spend Saturdays during the colder months building frosty 3D sculptures, painting snowy landscapes, engineering mini animal habitats and experimenting with the chemistry behind melting chocolate and temperature change.

New curriculum this school year includes a variety of STEM courses such as Animal Architects, where students study how birds, beavers and insects construct their homes before designing nests, dams and habitats of their own. Superhero Science transforms classical STEM concepts into real-world challenges – building gliding capes, constructing strong bridges or testing magnetism through superhero-themed experiments. Older STEM students in grades 4-8 take on even deeper explorations such as in Weather Wizards & Eco-Engineers, designed by Ms. Marra, which invites them to study clouds, storms, animal adaptations and sustainability by designing wind turbines, water filters and

model ecosystems.

"We want our older students to feel challenged," said Deana Verone, the SCOPE Enrichment program director from Jericho. "They're ready for bigger ideas such as climate, culture and engineering. When we give them real tools and space to explore, you can see the excitement in their learning."

The impact of these programs is evident in the overwhelmingly positive feedback from families. In the most recent EDM parent survey, more than 50% rated SCOPE's enrichment programs "Outstanding," while another 25% rated them "Great" and 15% rated them "Good." Combined, the program maintains a satisfaction rate well of over 90%. Summer enrichment participants had an overall positivity rating of 98%, with more than 65% of families rating the program "Outstanding."

For many families, SCOPE is more than just supplemental courses. It's a highlight of the school year.

"Everything is amazing," one parent wrote. "Wonderful teachers, thoughtful planning – my child loves going."

"My daughter loves the activities at SCOPE EDM," another shared. "The teachers are kind and welcoming."

"My son looks forward to enrichment even more than his standard school day," a third parent noted. "This is by far our first choice for after-school programming. He doesn't want to go home when we pick him up!"

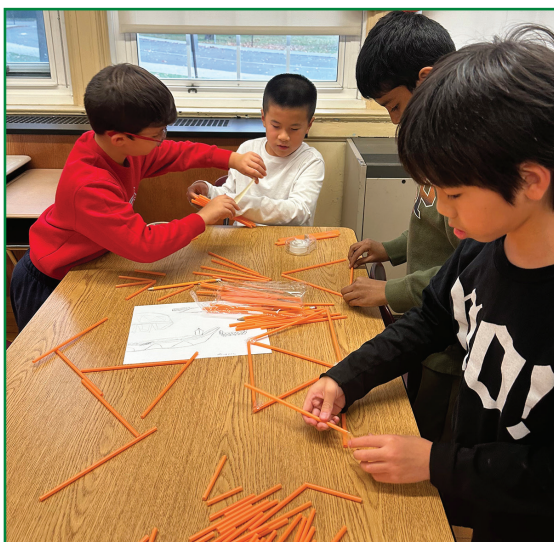
Students echo the enthusiasm. "I get to build things every week," a third grader said. "It feels like fun, not school." A middle school student added, "SCOPE lets us try things we never do in regular school. You feel like you're discovering something new. The Saturday cooking classes are amazing; we make new things every week!"

Teachers see that growth every session.

"In STEM, students think they're just playing," Joanne Ryan, an enrichment teacher from Garden City said, "but they're learning design thinking, teamwork and problem-solving. They learn to experiment and invent in novel ways. It also fosters collaboration and communication in the best way."

"Our goal is to ignite students' imaginations and model a learning environment that celebrates hands-on learning, critical thinking and creativity," Jenn Straubinger, an educator from Garden City, said. "We strive to prepare them for a technology-driven future and help them see the possibilities for exploration are limitless."

As the 2025-2026 year continues, SCOPE Enrichment is planning its summer 2026 program, which will continue to provide Long Island students with hands-on experiences that inspire creativity, strengthen academic foundations and build lifelong confidence.



Master Teachers Enjoy Carmans River Excursion

The SCOPE Outdoor Environmental Education program facilitated a workshop for 20 Stony Brook University Master Teachers this October. The program was led by Mary Peterle, SCOPE outdoor education specialist.

The teachers were immersed in the ecology of the Carmans River, one of Long Island's few remaining wild rivers. Participants explored the river by canoe, observing diverse aquatic and riparian habitats while learning about native plant and animal species, watershed dynamics

and human impacts on freshwater ecosystems. The goal of this workshop was to train teachers on how to provide science classes with authentic, place-based field experiences that highlight freshwater ecology and conservation practices on Long Island.



SCOPE LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE SPARKS HIGH-IMPACT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

SCOPE Education Services, in proud partnership with Stony Brook University, the Nassau and Suffolk superintendent associations, and the Nassau and Suffolk chapters of the New York State School Facilities Association, is continuing its commitment to elevate K-12 leadership across Long Island through the Leadership Collaborative, a comprehensive professional learning series designed for superintendents, district-level administrators and facilities directors. With an exceptional turnout this fall and overwhelmingly positive feedback, the collaborative is a go-to resource for districts across Long Island.

Rooted in the belief that strong leadership transforms school systems, this year’s programming brings together experts, practitioners and aspiring administrators for rigorous, relevant and forward-thinking sessions that meet the evolving demands of today’s school systems.

Advancing Leadership at the Superintendent and Cabinet Level

The 2025-2026 Leadership Collaborative for Superintendents and Cabinet-Level Administrators opened with “Collective Bargaining and Contract Negotiations,” a session led by two widely respected figures in Long Island education – John Gross of Ingerman Smith LLP, an experienced school labor attorney, and Peter Scordo, a retired superintendent and human resources director. Participants engaged in the history of collective bargaining, case-based learning around contract structures, negotiation strategies, labor-management relations and the importance of maintaining trust and transparency during the bargaining process.

The presenters provided valuable insight into current trends, arbitration patterns and legal considerations, while also grounding the learning in real-world scenarios and practical takeaways that leaders could immediately apply in their districts. The session underscored the reality that, in a time of increased complexity, clear communication and collaborative problem-solving are essential skills for superintendents, HR leaders and boards of education.

The session received strong reviews and requests for additional sessions and set the tone for a robust year of superintendent-focused leadership development.

Strengthening the Operational Backbone: Facilities Leadership in Focus

SCOPE also launched a targeted set of sessions for facilities directors and their leadership teams,



Chris Van Cott and Kristen White, assistant superintendents in the Rocky Point School District, attended the session, “Collective Bargaining and Contract Negotiations.”

addressing an area of school operations that has become both increasingly complex and increasingly essential.

The first course of the fall, “Tech Tools for the Trade: Solutions for Today’s Facilities Director,” gave facilities leaders hands-on exposure to new technologies, digital platforms and operational tools that can improve efficiency, communication and long-term planning. From learning how to use artificial intelligence as an everyday tool to develop and manage record keeping, design and budgets, to digital work-order systems and preventive maintenance software, participants gained a modern toolkit designed to streamline operations and increase responsiveness across schools.

This was followed by an in-depth session on “Bond Projects and Capital Planning,” a timely workshop as districts prepare for the next phase of building improvements, expansions, safety upgrades and sustainability work. Facilities directors engaged in discussions around New York State Education Department processes, bid timelines, design options and long-range facilities planning. The dialogue was practical, candid and focused on helping districts develop well-sequenced, community-supported building initiatives that position their facilities for the future.

Leaders across the region have expressed deep appreciation for access to these sessions, which bridge technical expertise, local district examples and peer collaboration among facilities professionals.

Cultivating the Next Generation of District Leaders

In partnership with the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, SCOPE proudly launched a new season of five sessions for aspiring

superintendents: “Shaping Aspiring District Leaders.” This initiative reflects a shared goal across Long Island to develop a strong pipeline of future superintendents who are prepared, principled and aligned with the complex responsibilities of district leadership. The series has already delivered rich, interactive sessions on:

- Leadership of Personnel and Instructional Services. Building foundational HR knowledge, understanding staff supervision processes and navigating sensitive personnel matters.
- Understanding the Superintendent Search Process. Insights from sitting and retired superintendents on what boards look for, how candidates can prepare and how leaders can present themselves professionally.
- Ethical Leadership and Governance. Exploring case studies on decision-making, confidentiality, fairness and the moral responsibilities of district leaders.
- Preparing to Lead; Transitioning to Superintendency. Offering an authentic look at the expectations, skills and mindsets required to step into the superintendent role, including board relations, community leadership and personal readiness for the next level.
- School Business Management. Demystifying budget development, forecasting, reserves, capital projects, financial reporting and the critical questions every district superintendent should know.

These workshops are intentionally practical, offering tools, templates, leadership frameworks and opportunities for collegial discussion – all designed to help rising leaders understand both the “big picture” and the day-to-day realities of district administration.

**UPCOMING SESSIONS
for DISTRICT LEADERS**

- Fiscal Leadership: Navigating Budgets, Risks, and Resources
- Facilities Management, Creating a Vision and Plan for Actualizing 21st Century Schools – What Do I Need to Know?
- School Board Relations & Navigating Local Politics
- Human Resource Decisions: Leadership, Liability, and Legal Essentials
- Safe Schools, Strong Leadership: A Strategic Framework for District Leaders

Women in Leadership Conference Set for Jan. 9-10

A Transformative Two-Day Experience for School Leaders

SCOPE Education Services, along with several education partners, is proud to host a powerful two-day Women in Leadership Conference on Jan. 9-10 at the East Wind Long Island – a gathering designed to uplift, empower and equip women leaders and supervisors across the K-12 landscape.

This year’s conference features internationally renowned leadership expert Fran Prolman, whose dynamic, insightful and deeply human approach to leadership development has inspired thousands

of educators worldwide. Her work centers on self-trust, clarity, resilience and the courage it takes to lead authentically in today’s challenging educational environment.

Across the two days, participants will engage in interactive learning, reflective conversations and practical strategies that strengthen professional confidence and personal well-being. From navigating complex school dynamics to leading with purpose and presence, the conference is

intentionally crafted to support women in every leadership role – superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, principals, supervisors and emerging leaders.

The goal is to have participants reconnect with their “why,” build supportive networks, strengthen their leadership voice or simply take time to recharge. This experience promises to leave attendees inspired and better prepared to lead their teams and communities.

NEWS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS



GREAT NECK

Student Television Wins International Awards

Great Neck Public Schools Television is the proud recipient of four trophies through the 46th annual Telly Awards, an international program that honors excellence in video and television across a variety of platforms. GNPS/TV received one Silver Telly and three Bronze Telly trophies for student-produced television programs highlighting activities around the district. Additionally, a student film created by six students in Great Neck South High School's Independent Film Study course was also awarded a Silver Telly. GNPS/TV programs air on public access television stations within Great Neck and are available on-demand on the district website.



COPIAGUE

Deauville Gardens West Is PTA School of Excellence

Deauville Gardens West Elementary School in the Copiague School District has been recognized as a 2024-2026 National PTA School of Excellence, one of only 14 schools on Long Island, 24 in New York State and 330 nationwide to earn this prestigious honor.

To receive the designation, school PTAs engage families, teachers and administrators in meaningful dialogue, gather community feedback and develop action plans that benefit the entire school community. The designation remains in effect for two years.



HERRICKS

Celebration of School Spirit at STRIVE Homecoming

On Oct. 1, Herricks High School hosted a special STRIVE Homecoming Experience, offering students an engaging and spirited day of activities alongside their fellow classmates, football players, cheerleaders and their favorite Herricks mascots.

The event provided structured opportunities for students to connect, collaborate and celebrate school pride, highlighting the district's commitment to fostering community, teamwork and positive student experiences. Students participated in fun and interactive activities designed to strengthen relationships and create lasting memories.



NORTH MERRICK

Fayette School Promotes Peace With Pinwheels

The Harold D. Fayette School community in the North Merrick School District stood together to promote peace and happiness in recognition of the International Day of Peace. Representatives of each class bravely stood in front of their peers to share what peace means to them. Each class designed posters with peaceful messages and drawings. Following students' presentation, the entire Fayette community gathered outside with rainbows of pinwheels in hand to form the shape of a heart.



PORT JEFFERSON

Students Attend Gift of Life Gala

Port Jefferson School District students Nick Hogan and Lia Donohue attended the Gift of Life's Golden Jubilee Gala, celebrating 50 years of life-saving humanitarian work. The event, the largest in the organization's history, united global partners, Rotarians and medical professionals from more than a dozen countries, along with U.S. hospitals and Rotary Clubs. Nick and Lia supported the evening by assisting with logistics, greeting and registering guests, coordinating seating and managing the silent auction, which helped ensure a seamless and memorable celebration.

CONNETQUOT

Artist Michael Albert Brings Cerealism to Idle Hour Elementary

Idle Hour Elementary students in the Connetquot Central School District explored the world of modern art and sustainability during a special visit from acclaimed pop artist Michael Albert. Known for his unique collage style called Cerealism, which uses recycled cereal boxes and consumer packaging, Al-

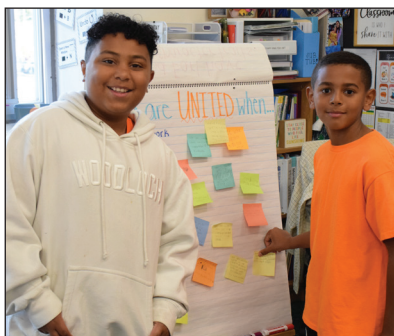


bert led a hands-on enrichment program, the Modern Pop Art Experience. Students created their own collages using cereal boxes, experiencing the creative process firsthand.

NORTH BELLMORE

Peace, Love and Unity at Martin Avenue School

Kindness blossomed at Martin Avenue Elementary School in the North Bellmore School District, which joined in the nationwide celebration of Unity Day. All students, faculty and staff gathered on the basketball court in their orange attire to form a human peace sign. Students added paper leaves with messages of kindness to a unity tree and every class signed a unity pledge.



Fifth graders spoke about the meaning of unity. Following the prompt "We are united when..." each student wrote a response on a sticky note, which was then added to a class compilation.



LONG BEACH

Middle School Students Honor Veterans

Long Beach Middle School seventh grade students placed flags in front of the Long Beach Public Schools district offices as part of their Field of Honor Day, held in recognition of Veterans Day 2025. Students also watched a Veterans Day video and created thank-you cards to share with local veterans.

NEWS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS



CARLE PLACE

Students Participate in Breakthrough T1D Walk

For the 30th year, Carle Place's Cherry Lane School partnered with students, parents and the PTA to support Breakthrough T1D through its annual awareness event. Students learned about Type 1 diabetes and took part in a symbolic walk, "Giving up playtime to give back," joined this year by middle and high school physical education classes. After the walk, volunteers recognized students' efforts with paper sneaker tokens, reinforcing the school's commitment to T1D research and community service. The tradition began when a Cherry Lane parent sought to give back after their child was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

NASSAU BOCES

Students Work With Marty Lyons Foundation to Help Grant a Wish

The Marty Lyons Foundation grants wishes that bring joy and comfort to children facing severe medical challenges. The organization held its fourth annual Evening of Thanks Gala in November, honoring wishes granted in 2025. Nassau BOCES GC Tech cosmetology students helped grant the wish of this year's wish child, who wants to go to Disney World.

BOCES students gave her a fairy dusting of make-up. Barry Tech culinary, carpentry, graphics and fashion design students created a special cake, wooden centerpieces, Disney-inspired graphics and princess dresses, respectively. The Long Island High School for the Arts created a special castle backdrop for the gala.



BAYPORT-BLUE POINT

Fifth Graders Explore the Living Shoreline at Shore Front Park

Blue Point Elementary fifth graders took a field trip to explore the newly restored living shoreline at Shore Front Park in Patchogue. As part of their visit, students observed the shoreline's vegetation and documented their findings through detailed drawings and written reflections. They discussed how the shoreline has changed and learned why these improvements play a vital role in reducing erosion and protecting the local environment. On the dock, students measured spat-on-shell oysters with calipers, examined the biodiversity found in oyster cages and discovered how oysters contribute to a healthier ecosystem.

LAWRENCE

District Participates in Coaches and Athletes Unity Summit

The Lawrence School District participated in the annual Unified Champion Schools Coaches and Athletes Unity Summit, joining more than 55 schools for a day focused on leadership, fair play, mental health and community growth through sports. Representing Lawrence were coach Donald Crispyn, special education teacher David Ziff, and student-athletes Jordan Gajadhar, Saully Hernandez, Eitan Kisheev and Jayden Tor-



res. The summit featured interactive workshops promoting empathy and leadership. A highlight was the students sharing the stage with keynote speaker Mark Leinweaver, engaging in a powerful discussion on resilience, responsibility and unity in sports.

MANHASSET

Music Department Honored With NYSSMA Presidential Citation Award

The Manhasset Public Schools music department has been awarded the Presidential Citation Award from the New York State School Music Association, the organization's highest honor. Manhasset was one of only two school districts in New York State to receive this prestigious recognition in 2025. This recognition reflects the district's comprehensive K-12 music



education curriculum, delivered by outstanding educators who consistently go above and beyond to support student achievement, and honors the strong community support for the arts in Manhasset.

HICKSVILLE

Middle School Warmly Greets New Students

Hicksville Middle School recently hosted a special breakfast for new entrants into the district. Principal Benjamin Tangney welcomed the students to the cafeteria and highlighted some of the unique opportunities in the building. The experience helped students recognize the many other new faces in the building and gave them a chance to



connect. Members of the school's support staff were also on hand to help answer any questions and make a face-to-face connection with the new students.

ISLAND PARK

Elementary Students Get Moving With a Purpose

Francis X. Hegarty Elementary School students in Island Park showed their school spirit during the annual Winner's Walk on Oct. 8, which was held indoors due to rain but was filled with energy and encouragement. This year's event also promoted giv-



ing back, as families donated gently used sneakers through a GotSneakers recycling fundraiser to benefit a local breast cancer nonprofit.



HEWLETT-WOODMERE

DECA Team Wins First Place in Statewide Competition

Hewlett High School's DECA team, comprised of seniors Inon Azour and Aidan Khan and junior George Chikvanaia, earned first place in New York State in the DECA Virtual Business Challenge – Retailing Track. Competing against top-performing teams statewide, their strategic decision-making and business skills helped them nearly double the profit of their closest competitor. Advisers Susan Hanlon and Molly Henck noted the team's teamwork and insight, and how their success reflects the strength of the DECA program and its focus on developing future business leaders.

NEWS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS



LYNBROOK

Molloy University Students Teach Health Basics at Kindergarten Center

Molloy University nursing students returned to the Lynbrook Kindergarten Center on Oct. 22 to teach tips on maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle at the annual Health Fair. Molloy students crafted several stations for kindergartners to visit and participate in activities that focused on healthy habits for different parts of the body. Highlighting the function of the heart, for instance, kindergartners felt their hearts beat faster after performing jumping jacks.

The innovative joint program between Lynbrook Schools and Molloy University allows nursing students to showcase their knowledge with a younger audience while kindergartners are inspired to lead a healthy lifestyle.



HARBORFIELDS

High School Students Explore Careers

In mid-November, Harborfields High School students connected with 80 employers at the third annual Career, Connect, Talent and Trade Expo, hosted by the high school's Career Readiness Network. While New York State adopted the Portrait of a Graduate in July 2025, Harborfields has long prepared students for college and careers.

At the expo, students explored diverse career paths, gained insights into highly desirable workforce skills, and demonstrated their readiness for the jobs of tomorrow. As the world of work continues to evolve, Harborfields continues to equip students with adaptable, real-world skills that set them up for long-term success.

ELMONT

Firefighters Impart Safety Knowledge at Stewart Manor

In celebration of National Fire Prevention Week, Stewart Manor School scholars received an exciting and inspiring visit from real-life heroes – firefighters Mr. Patterson and Mr. Moaz from the New York City Fire Department on Oct. 10. During their visit, the firefighters shared insights into their vital role and emphasized life-saving safety tips, including the importance of evacuating immediately when there's smoke or fire, and calling



911 in any emergency. Following the assembly, students got an exciting opportunity to explore an actual fire truck, courtesy of the Stewart Manor Fire Department, stationed in the school courtyard.



OCEANSIDE

Ending Hunger is a Can Do for Students

Oceanside sixth grade Project Extra students built sculptures from canned food to support the United Nations Sustainability goal of zero hunger. After displaying their structures and themed posters at school,

students donated the cans to local food pantries.

School No. 5's slogan for its lighthouse build was "Light the way to end world hunger." School No. 8's rainbow cake theme was "Life isn't always a piece of cake, but if we work together we'll make sure everyone gets one."

GLEN COVE

Artists Recognized in Nassau County Exhibition

Glen Cove High School senior Aileen Castaneda and junior Gianna DiMaggio had their collaborative artwork, "Splattered Fashion," selected for the prestigious Nassau County High School Juried Art Competition and Exhibition. Their piece was featured in the countywide showcase celebrating exceptional artistic talent among high school students from across Nassau County. An artist reception was held on Nov. 2, where Aileen and Gianna were honored alongside other selected young artists. They completed their piece under the guidance of art teacher LeeAnn Palazzo.



ELWOOD

AP Environmental Science Students Dig Into Hands-On Soil Study

Elwood-John H. Glenn High School's Advanced Placement Environmental Science class took an in-school field trip right outside the building to collect soil samples, a hands-on learning experience that brought their classroom lessons to life. Using specialized tools called soil augers, the students then headed back to the lab to conduct a full analysis, performing tests to determine crucial soil characteristics, including pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, porosity and soil texture.



MIDDLE COUNTRY

High School Students Attend Cohen Strong Kickoff

Students from Newfield and Centereach high schools, accompanied by Margaret Derasmo (NHS) and Angelina Saladino (CHS), attended the 2025-2026 Cohen Strong Mental Health Advocacy Kick-Off Event at Zucker Hillside Hospital.

The CSMH program is a partnership between Northwell Health and participating school districts like Middle Country and empowers students to become leaders in mental health awareness, wellness promotion and stigma reduction within their schools and communities. Through engaging workshops, outreach efforts and peer-led initiatives, these dedicated student advocates are preparing to make a lasting, positive impact on the well-being of those around them.



OYSTER BAY-EAST NORWICH District Celebrates Completion of \$29M Capital Improvement Project

The Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District celebrated the completion of its \$29 million capital improvement project on Oct. 17 with a ribbon-cutting event at Vernon Elementary School. The comprehensive initiative upgraded all three district campuses, adding a pre-K wing at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary, an innovation lab and broadcasting studio at Oyster Bay High School, and a new music wing, athletic center and cafeteria at Vernon School.

The project finished \$2.5 million under budget. The celebration featured student performances, including a live broadcast by the high school's news team, showcasing the district's enhanced facilities and expanded educational opportunities.



COMMACK

Primary Schools Launch Discovery Dens

After a pilot launch during the 2024-2025 school year, all four Commack primary schools now have dedicated spaces for technology-infused learning called "Discovery Dens." In the Discovery Dens, students work collaboratively at stations, including one featuring coding, and can create their own digital art.

For instance, at Wood Park Primary School's Discovery Den, second graders recently read Peter H. Reynolds' book, "The Dot," as a class. The primary students then colored in a dot and used the Quiver app to make their two-dimensional drawing come to life as a 3D animation.



BALDWIN

District Accepted Into League of Innovative Schools

Baldwin Union Free School District has been accepted into the League of Innovative Schools, a national network of school districts that connects and supports the nation's most forward-thinking leaders in education. The district was selected from a competitive national pool of applicants based on its educational leadership, demonstrated commitment to excellence, innovative vision for learning, key achievements and collaborative spirit.

WILLIAM FLOYD

Barbering Academy Offers Free Haircuts for Middle School Students

The William Floyd High School Barbering Academy, part of the district's award-winning career and technical education offerings, recently began providing free haircuts and shape ups for students at William Paca Middle School and William Floyd Middle School. Students from Cara Cliffe's senior barbering class recently visited both schools to hone their skills and provide a valuable service to their younger peers. They plan on visiting each school once per month to further develop the skills they have been learning in the classroom and to experience what it is like to work with real clients.



SEWANHAKA

New Cosmetology Center Debuts

Sewanhaka Central High School District hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new career and technical education cosmetology building on Oct. 6. The state-of-the-art space has a parking lot for clients, a reception area, new salon equipment and more than 40 workstations. The funding for the construction was made possible due to a 2021 Capital Reserve Project and is aligned with the district's commitment to expanding and enhancing its CTE program. Ninety-six students districtwide are enrolled in the two-year program. Guests were invited into the space to take a tour and view students' hairstyling demonstrations following the ribbon cutting.



WEST ISLIP

Spooky Science and Stargazing

West Islip School District elementary students and their families enjoyed an exciting and educational Astronomy Night hosted by the district on Oct. 30. The evening began in the planetarium, where students learned about stars, constellations and the sun during a captivating presentation.

Following the show, students rotated through hands-on, Halloween-themed STEM stations led by members of the National Science Honor Society. Activities included launching ghost rockets, testing objects in a sink-or-float tank, building spooky bone bridges, engineering candy catapults and other interactive science challenges.



Congratulations Are in Order

APPOINTMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RIVERHEAD

Superintendent of Schools

With more than 26 years of education experience, Dr. Robert Hagan was appointed as the new superintendent of the Riverhead Central School District. Before joining Riverhead, he held various administrative roles at East Hampton, Longwood, Port Jefferson and William Floyd since 2007 and was a middle school and high school social studies teacher from 1999 to 2007. He also served as an adjunct professor at Stony Brook University and Fordham University.

Dr. Hagan received his bachelor's degree and doctorate from Fordham University and earned his master's degree from Dowling College, as well as a post-master's advanced graduate certificate from Stony Brook University.



ELMONT

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Dr. Linda E. Macias is the new assistant superintendent for finance and operations for Elmont Union Free School District, effective July 1. Dr. Macias most recently served as the assistant superintendent for business in Floral Park-Bellerose, where she worked to successfully pass a bond referendum totaling more than \$28 million.

She holds a doctorate in administration and leadership from St. John's University, advanced certifications in school district business leadership and school district leadership, a Master of Business Administration in health administration management, and certificates in school management and leadership from Harvard Business School.



Congratulations Are in Order

APPOINTMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BALDWIN

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Dr. Stephanie Rengifo has been appointed assistant superintendent for instruction for the Baldwin Union Free School District. She previously served as assistant director of instructional programs and, subsequently, director of curriculum, in which she led initiatives that elevated teaching and learning through collaboration, strategic planning and research-based practices. Under her oversight, the district launched its innovative Educator Residency Program, which she presented at The School Superintendents Association (AASA) Learning 2025 National Summit.



Prior to her tenure in Baldwin, Dr. Rengifo served as an assistant principal in New York City and received the United Federation of Teachers Excellence in Education Award for exceptional instructional practice and mentorship. She holds a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, a master's degree in education from the City University of New York, a master's degree in education from Hunter College and a juris doctor degree from Hofstra University School of Law.

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Denise Fisher has been appointed the assistant superintendent for human resources for the Baldwin Union Free School District following the retirement of Dr. Michelle Gallo. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Fisher served as the executive director of personnel for North Bellmore Union Free School District, overseeing staffing operations for more than 650 employees and leading key initiatives in state reporting, collective bargaining and employee support services.



Her administrative experience also encompasses six years as principal of Newbridge Road Elementary School and two years as assistant principal of Saw Mill Road Elementary School, following her earlier professional work as a literacy coach and classroom teacher. Ms. Fisher holds a master's in school administration and supervision from Touro College, a master's degree in education from Cambridge College, and a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and sociology from Queens College.

If you have information about your school district that you would like to share, please send it to Jill Gierasch at jgierasch@scopeonline.us or Andrew Hackmack at ahackmack@syntaxny.com.

GLEN COVE

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Alexa Doeschner has been appointed superintendent of schools for the Glen Cove City School District, effective July 1. A proven leader with 12 years of administrative experience, including 10 within the district, Dr. Doeschner brings a deep understanding of the community, a strong vision and a lifelong dedication to teaching and learning.

She began her career in public education as a founding teacher at Sunset Park High School, later serving as assistant principal. She continued her leadership as an assistant principal at Glen Cove High School, district coordinator of science, principal of Landing Elementary School and most recently as assistant superintendent. Dr. Doeschner holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Columbia University, a master's degree in teaching from Pace University, a master's degree in organizational leadership from Columbia University Teachers College, and a doctorate from Southern New Hampshire University.



FLORAL PARK-BELLEROSE

Assistant Superintendent for Business

Christine Kim is the new assistant superintendent for business in Floral Park-Bellerose Union Free School District. She brings 22 years of experience in finance and seven years in public education administration to the role, with a strong history in budget development, audit coordination, capital project oversight and compliance management.



Most recently, she served the Wantagh Union Free School District as the assistant director of business. Ms. Kim holds a master's degree in school district business leadership and has been recognized by the New York State Association of School Business Officials.

HICKSVILLE

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Hicksville Public Schools welcomes Dr. Timothy Piciullo as the district's new assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Dr. Piciullo brings more than two decades of educational experience and a proven record of instructional leadership. For the past 11 years, he served as principal of South Ocean Middle School in the Patchogue-Medford School District, where he led a transformation of instructional practices, improved student achievement and cultivated a culture of inclusion and academic excellence.



Over his 23-year career, Dr. Piciullo has also held roles as a high school assistant principal in both the Long Beach and Hauppauge school districts, and earlier as a dean, coach and business and technology teacher.

BRENTWOOD

Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Appointed

Brentwood alumna Stacey Brdey, former principal of Frank J. Cannon Southeast Elementary School, was appointed in September to succeed Ann Palmer as assistant superintendent for elementary education in the Brentwood Union Free School District.

Since beginning her career as a special education teacher in 1998, Ms. Brdey has been recognized for her student-centered approach and strong family partnerships. She advanced through roles as Committee on Special Education chairperson, assistant principal and principal, while also teaching at Dowling College. With degrees in special education and literacy, plus leadership diplomas, her journey reflects a deep commitment to equity, collaboration and the transformative power of education.



Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Retires

Brentwood Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Ann Palmer retired in December after more than 30 years with the district. A Brentwood graduate, Palmer began her career in 1993 in the district's evening and summer high school program before joining as an English teacher in 1996. She later served as English department head, assistant principal and coordinator of language arts.

For two decades, Palmer co-chaired district committees, helped guide curriculum development, and held leadership roles with the Brentwood Principals and Supervisors Organization, the Brentwood Rotary Club and Eastern Suffolk BOCES.



Sunhee Choi *a Passionate Leader in Child Care*

The Student Services department proudly recognizes Sunhee Choi as a SCOPE employee deserving of the highest level of recognition – SCOPE’s Shining Star. Her dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment to students and staff have made a lasting impact across our Child Care programs. Sunhee’s strong work ethic, attention to detail and consistently positive attitude exemplify SCOPE’s values and set a standard of excellence for others to follow.

Since 2019, Sunhee has served as the site director of the East Meadow Bowling Green Child Care After-School Program, which has more than 90 students enrolled. She creates a warm, structured and engaging environment where every



child’s unique gifts are celebrated. Whether offering personalized encouragement, providing

opportunities for creative expression or planning hands-on activities that highlight students’ strengths, Sunhee ensures every child feels seen, supported and valued.

Her monthly activity calendars showcase her passion for enriching student experiences. She designs thoughtful arts and crafts, STEAM projects and themed events such as making homemade butter for National Butter Day, teaching “Cotton Eye Joe” for International Country Music Day, and guiding students in creating thank-you cards for local first responders on National Hero Day. Sunhee also incorporates collaborative projects like September’s “Manner Tree” mural and coordinates special learning opportunities, including an

exciting fire department visit during Fire Prevention Week.

Sunhee’s enthusiasm, organization and dedication make her an invaluable leader. At the 2024 School District Awards, she received the Support Staff Award of Excellence from the East Meadow School District, which described her as “a gift to our families,” noting that even her first name reflects the warmth and respect with which she communicates with administration, staff, students and families. Sunhee was the first SCOPE Child Care employee ever to receive this honor from a district, an achievement we proudly celebrate.

Sunhee’s exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment truly make her SCOPE’s Shining Star.

An Insight Into SCOPE’s History and Mission

By DR. JOHN STIMMEL

SCOPE Education Services was originally chartered in 1964 as the Suffolk County Organization for the Promotion of Education by 12 founding school superintendents. Its provisional and later permanent charter were granted by the New York State Board of Regents.

Over the past six decades, the organization adopted the simplified name SCOPE, but its core mission remained the same: to improve education and promote best practices through cooperative study and research among member districts. Since then, SCOPE’s mission has grown and evolved to include child care, enrichment programs, universal prekindergarten and a broad range of services for children, families, boards of education and educators.

Today, the SCOPE Board of Directors includes 16 public-school superintendents from across Nassau and Suffolk counties, along with several college administrators. This dedicated group works closely with Mr. George Duffy, SCOPE’s executive director, to guide and support the programs delivered by SCOPE’s talented staff to thousands of Long Island students and educators each day.

SCSSA Focus on Future-Ready Youth

By TIM EGAN

SCSSA President

Superintendent, Kings Park School District

The Suffolk County School Superintendents Association was established more than 75 years ago to provide leadership and support for our members. Every year the SCSSA establishes priorities and areas of focus.

One important priority and area of focus for 2025-2026 is ensuring that our county’s youth are future ready. We have been engaging with BOCES, private-sector companies and agencies, and local colleges and universities to establish strong relationships and partnerships to support our region’s youth and their postgraduation plans. Our shared goal is that every graduate has an actionable plan for their future upon graduation. Two important aspects of this work are support for dual enrollment courses and career and technical education. The ultimate goal is to support the local workforce.

The SCSSA general membership meeting that was held on Dec. 4 focused on the CTE pathway into the workforce. The association’s Educational Practices Committee, chaired by Dr. Roberta Gerold, superintendent of the Middle Country Central School District, and Dr. Paul Romanelli,



superintendent of the West Islip Union Free School District, planned and implemented a three-hour program that included regional BOCES representatives, industry and U.S. Navy partners, district-based CTE programs and higher education partners, including Suffolk County Community College.

Bob Vecchio, Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association executive director, also provided an overview of the planned N-SSBA/SCSSA/NCCSS joint conference which will also focus on CTE pathways. This annual event is scheduled for Jan. 22, 2026, at the Huntington Hilton. SCOPE Education Services, school superintendents and N-SSBA are all hard at work creating multiple classroom-to-career pathways for our county’s youth.

SCOPE Education Services

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Contact: Kelly Hartofelis
(631) 360-0800, ext. 181
khartofelis@scopeonline.us



Child Care Services

Child Care Site Directors
Assistant Directors
Group Leaders
Substitutes

Contact: Renee Mercer
(631) 881-9632
cc@scopeonline.us

Why Local School Board Associations Matter

By **BOB VECCHIO**

Executive Director

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association

Recently I was asked the question, “What value is there in being a member of the Nassau-Suffolk Schools Board Association?” This is a fair question and one that I asked myself when I was a board member. There are times when local issues require local advocacy and others when a regional school board association can make a difference. Here are some examples of where N-SSBA has made a difference.

A few years ago, when the state explored restructuring LIPA into a full public power authority, we were deeply concerned about the fate of the PILOT payments that support school district budgets. As a member of the LIPA Advisory Panel, I ensured these payments would be protected, regardless of the outcome. We also helped a Nassau district navigate a specific PILOT concern by connecting it directly with legislative leaders in Albany.

N-SSBA has played a critical role in expanding career and technical education opportunities, including linking a Suffolk district with the Marine Industrial Base to launch a welding program that supports the rebuilding of the Navy submarine fleet. This partnership will soon lead to similar



programs in additional districts.

We also convene a regional mental wellness workgroup, bringing together superintendents and community providers to address the youth mental health crisis. This collaboration has already produced a new CTE pathway for students interested in mental health careers, launching in several Suffolk County districts.

Another initiative from this group is the “Handle with Care” program. When law enforcement responds to an incident at a home with school-aged children, schools receive a confidential notice simply identifying the address. This alerts staff that a student may need additional support, not discipline. The program now serves all Southampton Town schools and is being piloted in Huntington, with legislation forthcoming to expand it statewide.

N-SSBA also remains vigilant on legislation that uniquely impacts Long Island. This year, we pushed back against a bill requiring only Long Island school districts to use project labor agreements on capital projects over \$1 million – an unfunded mandate that would significantly drive up costs. Although the bill did not pass the Assembly, we expect it to return and will continue our advocacy.

Similarly, we helped defeat a Suffolk County bill that sought to restrict executive compensation for nonprofit organizations, posing serious threats

to BOCES and reducing access to essential services such as mental health programs and food pantries. In Nassau County, we have repeatedly fought attempts to end the county guarantee protecting school districts from the financial fallout of successful tax certiorari claims.

Most recently, when Suffolk’s Board of Elections notified districts that they would no longer provide voting machines or Election Day services beginning in May 2026, N-SSBA immediately convened district leaders and election commissioners to explore solutions that protect schools from logistical and financial strain.

Our advocacy extends beyond education-specific concerns. We collaborate closely with regional partners, including the Long Island Association and the business community, on workforce development and policy issues affecting schools. We work in partnership with the Nassau and Suffolk superintendent associations to align messaging and coordinate media relations. And we maintain strong relationships with elected officials at every level to ensure Long Island’s needs are understood and represented.

We also continue to fight for fair funding formulas that recognize Long Island’s higher cost of living, provide timely training for board members, and remain available to support governance teams on roles, responsibilities and best practices.

Local school board associations matter. Thank you for your continued support and membership in N-SSBA.

Strengthening Leadership Through Collaboration: NCCSS Supports Nassau County’s School Leaders

By **MARIE TESTA**

NCCSS President

Superintendent, North Bellmore School District

The Nassau County Council of School Superintendents recently concluded its professional development series, reinforcing its commitment to supporting Nassau County school leaders through collaboration and advocacy. The series provided superintendents with practical strategies, real-world insights and opportunities to connect with peers – ensuring success for every student.

Leadership Programs

Two signature programs play a key role in this work. The Future District Leaders Program, designed for aspiring superintendents, offers guided discussions and interactive sessions on entry planning, budgeting, community engagement, personnel and labor responsibilities, and the superintendent search process. The New Superintendents Workshops, tailored for newly appointed superintendents, focus on the realities of district leadership and provide strategies for success from experienced colleagues.

Organized by Executive Director Ranier Melucci and facilitated by seasoned Nassau County superintendents, both programs give participants direct access to lessons learned and practical guidance from experienced leaders.

Countywide Committees

Committees anchor and extend this work across the county. The Legislative and Policy, Curriculum and Instruction, Mental Health and Wellness, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Technology, and Professional Development committees bring superintendents and district professionals together to address emerging challenges, develop coordinated strategies and guide countywide decision-making. By analyzing issues from multiple perspectives, these committees help ensure that responses reflect the evolving needs of students, staff and communities.

Advocacy in Action

Advocacy remains a priority for NCCSS. The Legislative and Policy Committee monitors policies, evaluates proposed legislation and communicates the impact of mandates on districts. Through position statements, meetings with elected officials and participation in statewide initiatives, NCCSS ensures Nassau County’s voice is heard at the local, state and federal levels.

Advocacy also extends to the Commissioner’s Advisory Council, which meets quarterly. The first meeting of the year was held on Nov. 20, where members met with Commissioner Dr. Betty A. Rosa, New York State Council of School Superintendents President Donna DeSiato and State Education Department leadership to share ideas and discuss current education topics, including the



Attending the Commissioner’s Advisory Council meeting were, from left, Great Neck Superintendent and NYSCOSS President-Elect Dr. Ken Bossert, Franklin Square Superintendent Dr. Jared Bloom, NYSCOSS President Dr. Donna J. DeSiato, North Bellmore Superintendent and NCCSS President Marie Testa, NYSED Commissioner Betty Rosa and Garden City Superintendent Dr. Kusum Sinha.

Portrait of a Graduate initiative and the expansion of career and technical education opportunities.

Growing Leaders Collaboratively

Through advocacy, committee engagement and targeted leadership development, NCCSS builds a strong pipeline of future leaders ready to serve with confidence. By investing in thoughtful planning, collective expertise and meaningful support, the council ensures that superintendents rise together, growing alongside one another, learning from one another and strengthening their individual leadership as they lead their own districts. As educational demands continue to evolve, NCCSS remains committed to supporting the leaders who guide Nassau County’s schools – all for the success of every student.



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If you have information about your school district that you would like to share, please send it to Jill Gierasch at jgierasch@scopeonline.us or Andrew Hackmack at ahackmack@syntaxny.com.