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Long Island Educators Come Together at SCOPE Annual Dinner Meeting

SCOPE Education Services welcomed school district representatives from across Long Island for its 41st Annual Dinner Meeting for Superintendents and School Board Members at the Bourne Mansion in Oakdale on Aug. 11.

Upon entering the event, attendees were given name cards and had chances to network and connect with other superintendents and Board of Education members. George L. Duffy, executive director of SCOPE Education Services, delivered a welcome address to all who attended the event. He announced that after 20 years of dedication and service to SCOPE, he will be retiring effective January 2027.

Dr. John Stimmel will take the helm as executive director. Dr. Stimmel is serving as deputy director of SCOPE and will assume his new responsibilities at the beginning of 2027. His previous positions included assistant principal in the Three Village School District; principal in Riverhead; and principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent in Sayville.

Mr. Duffy took time to recognize all newly appointed superintendents and elected board members before passing the microphone to Robert Vecchio, executive director of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association.

After Mr. Vecchio offered his remarks, he was followed by Dr. Charles Dedrick, executive director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents. He urged all leaders to continue to put the needs of all students first through their work across Long Island schools.

Dr. Kenneth Bossert, president of SCOPE, shared a quote: "The race for excellence has no finish line," and he talked about the meaning of that phrase for all educators to strive for only the best for their students and their communities.

The Honorable Felicia Thomas-Williams, Long Island's representative on the New York State School Board of Regents, raved about the wonderful involvement that SCOPE has had in schools and with their students

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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.

The Most Important Lessons Come From Children

Dear Educators, Families and Friends of SCOPE,

As another school year begins, I find myself thinking less about the calendar and more about the people who have made my journey in education so meaningful.

For many years, I have had the privilege of walking into schools and classrooms and being surrounded by children. I have worked with older students, and for the past 20 years, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to work with some of our youngest learners through SCOPE.

After all these years, there is one thing I know for certain – children have taught me far more than I could ever teach them. They have taught me that a smile can change someone's day. They have taught me that a child can forgive quickly, laugh without hesitation and find wonder in things that adults often overlook. They have taught me that sometimes the most important thing we can do is simply listen.

Children do not spend their days worrying about whether someone is important enough to speak with. They simply want to be heard. They want to belong. They want to know that someone cares about them. Perhaps that is one of the greatest responsibilities we have as adults. To care. Not just to teach a lesson. Not just to meet a standard. Not just to complete a responsibility. But to care enough to know the child sitting in front of us. To recognize when something is wrong. To celebrate a child's success, no matter how small it may seem. To encourage the child who has begun to doubt himself. To remind a child that making a mistake does not make you a failure. That is what educators do.

Throughout my career, I have met thousands of extraordinary educators. Some were teachers. Some were administrators. Some worked in classrooms, offices, cafeterias, buses, playgrounds and child care programs. Their titles were different, but the best of them shared something very important. They cared. They understood that education is ultimately about relationships.

A child may forget the worksheet we gave them. They may forget the lesson we taught or the grade they received. But they will remember the adult who believed in them. They will remember the teacher who noticed that they were having a difficult day. They will remember the person who told them, "You can do this," when they weren't sure they could. That is the influence we have. And that is why I continue to believe so strongly in a simple message: In a world where you can be anything, be kind.

I have spent many years thinking about those words, and I believe they have never been more important than they are today. Kindness does not mean that we agree with everyone. It does not mean that we avoid difficult conversations or that we don't hold people accountable. Kindness means that even when we disagree, we remember the humanity of the person standing across from us. It means we listen before we judge. It means we try to under-

stand before we criticize. It means we recognize that everyone we meet is carrying something we may know nothing about. And, perhaps most importantly, it means that we model for our children the kind of world we hope they will one day create.

Our children are watching us. They watch how we speak to one another. They watch how we respond to disagreement. They watch how we treat people who are different from us. They watch whether we choose compassion or criticism, understanding or judgment, kindness or anger. We cannot simply tell children to be kind. We have to show them what kindness looks like.

As I reflect on my years in education, I realize that some of my most important lessons did not come from meetings, professional development sessions, books or policies. They came from children. They reminded me to slow down. They reminded me to listen. They reminded me not to take myself too seriously. They reminded me that every child has a story, and that every child deserves someone who believes in them. Those lessons have stayed with me.

As we begin the 2026-2027 school year, I hope we can carry those lessons with us. Let us continue to build schools and programs where children feel safe, where they feel valued and where they know that the adults around them

genuinely care about them.

Let us also remember that the work we do extends far beyond the school day. Every interaction we have with a child has the potential to influence that child's understanding of themselves and the world around them. That is an incredible responsibility. It is also an incredible privilege. After so many years in education, I am more convinced than ever that the most important thing we can give a child is not simply knowledge. It is the belief that they matter.

So, as we begin another year together, let us teach with purpose, lead with humility, listen with empathy and serve with compassion. And when given the choice of how we will treat another person, especially when that choice is difficult, I hope we will remember the lesson our children have been teaching us all along.

In a world where you can be anything, be kind.

May this school year bring you moments that remind you why you chose this profession, why you continue to serve children and why the work you do matters so very much. Thank you for allowing me to share this journey with you.

With gratitude, respect and appreciation,

George L. Duffy
Executive Director/CEO

A Message from the Executive Director

GEORGE L. DUFFY



save the DATE

DASA WORKSHOPS: **OCT. 26, DEC. 1**

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
WORKSHOPS: **OCT. 27, DEC. 1**

VIOLENCE PREVENTION
WORKSHOPS: **OCT. 29, DEC. 3**

TA CONFERENCE: **NOV. 3**

THE LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE COURSES
BEGIN: **NOV. 12**

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: **JAN. 8-9**



SCOPE Executive Director and CEO George Duffy was honored by the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, represented by President Denise Lindsay-Sullivan of Remsenburg-Speonk Union Free School District, and the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents, represented by President David Schneider of the Bethpage School District, on Sept. 28. The recognition took place during the New York State Council of School Superintendents annual conference in Saratoga Springs.

Great Neck Superintendent Kenneth Bossert Elected NYSCOSS President

Great Neck Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Bossert is serving as president of the New York State Council of School Superintendents for the 2026-2027 school year. Dr. Bossert was elected by his fellow NYSCOSS members to lead the organization, and he previously served as president-elect for 2025-2026. He was officially sworn in on June 28.

Dr. Bossert began his tenure as superintendent of the Great Neck Public Schools in August 2023, and under his leadership, the district has received several accolades, including Lakeville School's recognition as a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, and E.M. Baker, John F. Kennedy, Parkville and Saddle Rock schools' selection as Apple Distinguished Schools. Secondary schools across the district continue to be identified among the top 1% of U.S. News & World Report's Best Schools and Top STEM High Schools in the nation.

Dr. Bossert came to Great Neck from the Elwood Union Free School District, where he had served as superintendent for seven years. He was previously superintendent of schools of the Port Jefferson Union Free School District for five years. Other past positions include the Three Village School District's executive director for curriculum and instruction, and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction; principal in the Eastport-South Manor Central School District; assistant principal in the Longwood Central School District, and



as an elementary classroom teacher in the Middle Country Central School District.

In addition to serving as president of NYSCOSS, he is a member of the Commissioner's Advisory Council, president of the SCOPE Board of Directors, and a member of the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents' Executive Committee. Dr. Bossert also serves as an adjunct professor for Stony Brook University's educational administration program. Additionally, he is the second Great Neck superintendent to serve as president of the organization; Dr. John L. Miller, after whom Great Neck North High School is named, served from 1961-1962.

Lars Clemensen, Hampton Bays Leader, Named New York State Superintendent of the Year

Hampton Bays Public Schools Superintendent Lars Clemensen has been named the 2027 New York State Superintendent of the Year by the New York State Council of School Superintendents, recognizing his outstanding leadership, commitment to students and contributions to public education.

The prestigious honor recognizes a superintendent who exemplifies exceptional leadership on behalf of students, staff and the broader school community. Since becoming superintendent of Hampton Bays in 2010, Mr. Clemensen has led the district with a focus on academic excellence and student well-being. Under his leadership, the district has vastly expanded its course offerings, including Advanced Placement, science research opportunities and dual-enrollment college partnerships. Many programs take advantage of the district's coastal location to provide students with hands-on learning focused on local beaches, marine ecosystems, environmental conservation, hospitality and tourism.

Under Mr. Clemensen's leadership, the district also made history with the opening of the Hampton Bays Middle School, recognized as the first fully LEED-Certified new school in New York State and honored nationally as a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School.

"I am incredibly humbled to represent New York superintendents and my Hampton Bays community as the New York State Superintendent of the Year," Clemensen said. "This honor is the result of the work of our Board of Education, dedicated leadership team, outstanding faculty and staff, and above all, our remarkable students. Empowering all students to leverage their potential to soar the day after graduation is our mission, and I look forward to continuing to be a part of that work."



Three Village Educator Named 2027 New York State Teacher of the Year



Emiliano Geoninatti, a world language teacher at Murphy Middle School in the Three Village School District, was named the 2027 New York State Teacher of the Year. The honor is awarded by the New York State Teacher of the Year Advisory Council in collaboration with the New York State Education Department. Mr. Geoninatti was selected in recognition of his exceptional professional and personal impact on students and colleagues, as the award celebrates the powerful difference an outstanding teacher can make within a school and community.

As the 2027 New York State Teacher of the Year, Mr. Geoninatti will also serve as New York State's nominee for 2027 National Teacher of the Year, an honor administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers. He will also represent New York teachers at recognition and speaking events throughout the state, participate in professional learning activities and share his experiences and expertise with educators across New York.

"For the district to have a teacher of the year

at the state level is an enormous accomplishment and a gold star for the district," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin Scanlon said. "Mr. Geoninatti will inspire teachers throughout the state, not just in our community, from now on based on the work he has accomplished."

"As meaningful as this award is to me personally, I know this honor is much bigger than one individual teacher," Mr. Geoninatti said during his speech in Albany. "This award represents our profession. It represents every teacher who walks into a classroom each morning ready to give their students everything they have. It represents the teachers who arrive early, stay late, spend their evenings planning and continue thinking about the student who needs just a little more support. You never really know what a child may be carrying with them when they walk through your classroom door. That understanding has shaped the way I teach. I try to see the whole child, to recognize the challenges that may not be visible, and to create a classroom where every student feels safe, valued, supported and capable of succeeding."



Commack Schools of Study Provide Authentic Experiences

By DR. JORDAN COX

Commack High School is reinventing public education through its innovative Schools of Study initiative. Juniors and seniors now can participate in eight distinct Schools of Study: Business, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Fine Arts, Law, Liberal Studies, Medicine, and Vocational and Technical Skills. These programs provide authentic, real-world exposure through professional panels, job site visits and hands-on learning tailored to our students' interests.

A traditional high school education has long centered almost exclusively on a general liberal studies framework. While foundational academics remain critical, relying solely on that legacy model no longer serves modern students who are eager to explore specific career passions early. Commack High School students actively seek career-focused learning opportunities before making long-term decisions, as evidenced by enrollment data. Out of 829 students currently enrolled across the eight specialized Schools of Study, only 23 seniors have selected the School of Liberal Studies.



Too often, young people head off to college or trade programs with only a vague idea of their chosen field, only to realize after spending significant time and resources that it is not the path they truly want. Commack is changing that dynamic by bringing practical industry experience directly to the high school. In the spring of their sophomore year, students choose a school of study that aligns with their goals. This selection does not alter graduation requirements or dictate specific coursework but instead complements core classes with meaningful enrichment.

Over the past several years, district leadership has introduced specialized physical spaces designed to mirror actual working environments. A fully functional mock courtroom opened in September 2023. The following year, the high school opened its Bloomberg finance lab featuring a real-time stock ticker and 30 active Bloomberg terminals matching the exact technology used by professional financial firms.



Commack High School also features a campus greenhouse, an esports gaming lab, and a Visual Arts Lab that opened in September 2026 equipped with 3D printers, ergonomic seating and a soundproof podcasting studio.

This fall, the high school celebrates the opening of a state-of-the-art medical lab. Featuring five Anatomage tables, this space will inspire the next generation of health care professionals. With close to 250 students enrolled in our School of Medicine alone, this space

serves as one of the most transformative projects in our district.

The district's fundamental goal is to give every student an unprecedented head start, with the opportunity to test drive potential career paths and discover their true purpose before graduating from high school. By bridging classroom instruction with meaningful industry experience, Commack is empowering students to step into the future with clarity, confidence and a strong head start on their life journey.

Long Island Educators Come Together at SCOPE Annual Dinner Meeting

Continued from Page 1

and thanked all in leadership for their willingness to improve the lives of all.

To close, Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York Dr. Betty Rosa spoke highly of the work that has been done across all schools and SCOPE's continued commitment to providing students with opportunities to learn, grow and succeed. She commended the dedication of educators, administrators and staff who work each day to support students and strengthen the school community.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Beyond the School Day at SCOPE Enrichment

At 3 p.m. on a weekday afternoon, a school building begins to change. Buses pull away. Hallways grow quieter. Backpacks are zipped and classroom doors close. For most students, the formal school day has ended. But for SCOPE Enrichment programs across Long Island, another kind of school day is just getting started.

Elementary students might be designing an amusement park and discovering, almost incidentally, the engineering principles that make their structures work. In another room, high school students are measuring ingredients in Cooking and Edible Science. Down the hall, someone in middle school is learning to crochet for the first time. There may be a chess match underway, a canvas being painted, a robot refusing to cooperate, a theater rehearsal running long because nobody wants to stop, or a group of middle school students turning an idea into a virtual business.

The names are playful – All American Eats, Build & Thrill STEM, Chess & LEGO Adventure, Fine Arts & Crafts, and Kindness Club, for example – but the learning behind them is quite serious. SCOPE Enrichment serves students from prekindergarten through 12th grade, and the programs prove that when children are given enough different doors to walk through, they eventually find one they cannot resist opening. That is really the idea behind Enrichment.

It is tempting to describe Enrichment as something that happens “after school,” as though its chief characteristic is the hour at which it occurs. But the more interesting distinction is how children learn when they are given room

to explore something they have chosen. A student making a recipe is learning measurement, sequencing and collaboration. A child building an amusement park is encountering engineering, design and problem-solving. Theater asks students to communicate, interpret, cooperate and take a risk in front of other people. Crochet requires patience and fine-motor persistence. Photography changes the way a student looks at an ordinary scene. Coding requires discovering why something didn’t work and then staying with the problem long enough to fix it.

When older students explore app creation, culinary arts, fashion design, music, technology or virtual enterprise, Enrichment begins to intersect naturally with another important question: What might I want to do someday? College and career readiness does not have to begin with a college

application or a career fair. It can begin much earlier when an experience makes a young person think, “I am good at this. I like doing this.”

That idea has taken on particular importance in New York. The Board of Regents has adopted the New York State Portrait of a Graduate as part of the NY Inspires initiative, a long-term transformation of how the state thinks about readiness for life after high school. The Portrait asks educators to think beyond what students know and consider what they can do with what they know. Its vision includes academic preparedness, critical thinking, communication, creativity and innovation, global citizenship, planning for the future and reflection. These are the habits that SCOPE Enrichment programs have always tried to cultivate.

A Portrait-ready graduate is not



created during senior year. The curious kindergartner trying to make a LEGO structure stand, the fifth grader learning to collaborate with a cooking partner, the middle school student presenting a business idea and the high school student exploring coding or fashion design are at very different stages of their education. But the thread connecting them is they are learning to create, communicate, solve problems, persist, work with others and discover their own interests.

SCOPE Enrichment has the unusual opportunity to nurture that development across the entire prekindergarten-12 continuum.

One of the quiet strengths of SCOPE is the network behind the programs. Long Island’s school districts are proudly local. Each has its own identity, traditions, families and priorities. SCOPE allows those communities to remain distinct while connecting educators, instructors, curricula and good ideas across district lines. A project that captures children’s imaginations in one community can inspire programming somewhere else. A teacher with an unusual talent can bring that expertise into Enrichment. A course can be adjusted for younger students, expanded for older students or reimaged for another district. SCOPE educators learn from one another and programs become stronger because of it.

The result is not one standardized Enrichment program reproduced across Long Island. SCOPE works with districts to create schedules, grade



configurations and course offerings that make sense for the children and families in that particular community.

That flexibility matters to families, too. Today’s families are busy, and meaningful opportunities for children can quickly become expensive or difficult to fit into family life. SCOPE programs can operate after school, on Saturdays, during school recess and throughout the summer. Tuition is kept affordable because Enrichment should not be reserved only for families able to make a large financial commitment.

There is something wonderfully uncomplicated about watching a child become absorbed in making something. Somewhere between pre-K and graduation, education has to accomplish something larger than helping students accumulate information. It’s teaching young people to encounter an unfamiliar problem without immediately giving up; work with someone whose ideas differ from their own; communicate what they are thinking; and imagine something that does not yet exist and then begin the difficult work of creating it.

New York’s Portrait of a Graduate gives a name and a framework to many of those aspirations. SCOPE Enrichment gives students additional places to practice them. That is SCOPE Enrichment at its best. And across Long Island, it is happening every day after the bell rings, before school, on Saturdays, during summer, or during winter or spring vacation.

For more information
about SCOPE Enrichment or
inquiries on how to establish
a program in a district, call
(631) 873-8338 or email
enrichment@scopeonline.us

SCOPE Education Services

IS HIRING FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Universal PreKindergarten

UPK Teachers
Teacher Assistants
Teacher Aides
Field Supervisors
Substitutes

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

Hiring and
Referral Bonuses
Available!

Child Care Services

Child Care Site Directors
Assistant Directors
Group Leaders
Substitutes

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

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

APPOINTMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRIDGEHAMPTON

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The Bridgehampton Union Free School District appointed Robert Hauser as its new assistant superintendent for finance and operations. Mr. Hauser is no stranger to the Bridgehampton School community, as he previously served as an assistant superintendent for finance and operations from 2010 to 2018 before becoming the district's superintendent, a position he held from 2018 to 2021. Most recently, he served as assistant superintendent for business and operations for the Connetquot Central School District.



NASSAU BOCES

Assistant Superintendent for Business Services

Nassau BOCES has appointed Denise Gillis as assistant superintendent of business services. A seasoned school business official with district and auditing experience, Ms. Gillis started working with BOCES as director of business services. Prior to that, she served as assistant superintendent for finance and operations in the West Babylon Union Free School District. She also spent more than a decade as a supervisor with the auditing firm R.S. Abrams.



Ms. Gillis earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a Master of Business Administration in accounting from Hofstra University and an Advanced Certificate for School District Business Leader from Long Island University.

MINEOLA

Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations

Mineola Public Schools has named Diane Castonguay as assistant superintendent for business and operations. Ms. Castonguay has previously served as deputy superintendent and assistant superintendent for business at East Williston Union Free School District, as well as holding senior financial leadership positions in Amityville, Jericho and West Hempstead schools.

A former president of the Nassau Association of School Business Officials and vice president of the Statewide Workers' Compensation Board of the New York State Public Schools Trust, Ms. Castonguay holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Fairfield University, and a master's degree from Stony Brook University and is a New York State Licensed Certified Public Accountant.



BAYPORT-BLUE POINT

Superintendent of Schools

The Bayport-Blue Point Board of Education has appointed Robert E. Haas as the district's next superintendent of schools. A graduate of Bayport-Blue Point High School's Class of 1997, Mr. Haas has spent his career in the district beginning as a social studies teacher before taking on a series of leadership roles, including assistant principal, middle school principal, high school principal and, most recently, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Mr. Haas holds his bachelor's degree, master's degrees and post-master's professional certificate in school administration from Stony Brook University.



SHOREHAM-WADING RIVER

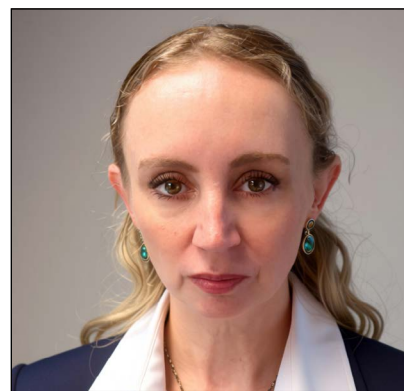
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Dr. Meg Sheehan is joining the Shoreham-Wading River Central School District as assistant superintendent for human resources. She comes to Shoreham-Wading River from the Port Washington School District, where she most recently served as an elementary principal. Her administrative experience also includes serving as an assistant principal in Port Washington, a principal in the Freeport School District, head of school at North Shore Montessori School and administrator and teacher educator at the West Side Montessori School and Center for Montessori Education. Before serving in these leadership roles, Dr. Sheehan spent several years in the classroom teaching in the Three Village Central School District.

SHOREHAM-WADING RIVER

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Dr. Jennifer Lewner has been appointed assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment in the Shoreham-Wading River Central School District. Most recently, Dr. Lewner served in the same role in the Valley Stream 30 Central School District. Before being appointed assistant superintendent in 2018, she served as the district's administrative director for 21st century learning and as an assistant principal. Earlier in her career, Dr. Lewner was a teacher with the New York City Department of Education, as well as at Scholars' Academy in Rockaway Park and the Brandeis School in Lawrence.



COPIAGUE

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The Copiague School District has appointed Karilyn Korec as its new assistant superintendent for finance and operations, effective Aug. 1.

Since joining the Copiague School District in 2021, Ms. Korec has served as district treasurer and, most recently, as assistant business administrator. From 2017-2021, she worked as an accountant for the Bayport-Blue Point School District.

Ms. Korec holds a Bachelor of Science in accounting from St. Joseph's University and a master's degree in business administration from The College of Saint Rose. Additionally, she has advanced certifications in organizational leadership/change management and school district business leader from The College of Saint Rose.

MILLER PLACE

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Marc Ferris has been named the superintendent of the Miller Place School District. He began his career as a social studies teacher at H. Frank Carey High School before transitioning into school administration at North Shore Middle School in Glen Head, where he served as assistant principal and later principal. Under his leadership, the school was nationally recognized as a School to Watch in 2015, and he was named Middle School Principal of the Year by the Council of Administrators & Supervisors in 2016.

In 2016, Dr. Ferris joined the Wantagh School District as assistant superintendent for instruction, overseeing curriculum and instruction through 2022. He then served as superintendent of the Sayville School District for four years, bringing extensive experience in instructional leadership, curriculum development and district administration to his work as an educational leader.



CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

APPOINTMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLORAL PARK-BELLEROSE

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Lauren Fretto is the new assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for the Floral Park-Bellerose Union Free School District. With more than 15 years of experience in education, Ms. Fretto brings extensive expertise to her new role. Most recently, she was the principal of Babylon Memorial Grade School, which serves students in grades 3-6.

Ms. Fretto earned a bachelor's degree in childhood education from Molloy College, a master's degree in literacy birth-grade 6 from Queens College and a certificate of advanced study in educational leadership from The College of Saint Rose.



HERRICKS

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Kerry Farrell has been appointed as the new assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in Herricks Public Schools. With more than two decades of educational experience, Ms. Farrell most recently served as principal of Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School, where she led district-aligned curriculum,



assessment and MTSS initiatives.

Her extensive background spans roles as an assistant principal, literacy coach, data specialist and classroom teacher. Recognized for her collaborative leadership style, she is dedicated to driving data-informed instructional improvement and fostering strong partnerships across the Herricks educational community.

COLD SPRING HARBOR

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

The Cold Spring Harbor Central School District appointed Dr. Alejandro "Alex" Rivera as its new assistant superintendent for human resources. Dr. Rivera brings extensive experience as an educator and school leader to Cold Spring Harbor.

He most recently served as principal of George A. Jackson Elementary School in the Jericho School District. During his tenure as principal, the school was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School.



GARDEN CITY

Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

With nine years of experience in education, Jacqueline Rehak joins the Garden City School District as the assistant superintendent for business and finance. She previously served as assistant superintendent for finance and operations in the Rockville Centre School District, overseeing budget

development, financial analysis and districtwide operations, including facilities, transportation and food services. She also brings experience in bond planning and capital project oversight, ensuring projects are completed on time and aligned with district priorities.

Previously, Ms. Rehak served for five years as assistant superintendent for business in the North Bellmore School District, where she managed all business operations, led budget development and prepared financial statements.



LYNBROOK

Superintendent of Schools to Retire

The Lynbrook Board of Education has formally accepted the retirement of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul Lynch, effective June 30, 2027, marking the conclusion of 18 years of service and leadership in Lynbrook Public Schools.

Dr. Lynch has served as superintendent for the past three years, following 14 years in other district leadership roles. Throughout his tenure, he has remained dedicated to advancing educational excellence, supporting students and staff, and strengthening partnerships with families and the broader Lynbrook community.



Growing Leaders, Strengthening Schools

SCOPE's Leadership Collaborative: Learning That Makes a Difference

The strongest school districts are learning organizations, not only for students, but for the adults who serve them. Today's school leaders face increasingly complex challenges, from fiscal pressures and workforce concerns to emerging technologies and heightened community expectations. Meeting these demands requires continuous learning, thoughtful decision-making and collaboration with colleagues who understand the work.

At SCOPE Education Services, professional development is practical, relevant and immediately applicable. Our 2026-2027 Leadership Collaborative, offered in partnership with Stony Brook University, provides expanded learning opportunities for administrators and facilities leaders.

What's New for School Administrators?

This year's Leadership Collaborative offers new and returning courses for superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, directors and

other school leaders.

New offerings include **Leading Special Education with Confidence**, focusing on leadership decisions that influence student outcomes; **Innovation in Action**, exploring new approaches to teaching, learning and organizational improvement; and **The Intentional Leader**, emphasizing purposeful leadership, trust and organizational culture.

Additional courses include **Strategic Planning That Leads to Action**, turning shared priorities into measurable progress, and **Capital Work: The Do's and Don'ts**, examining the challenges and pitfalls of capital projects. **Problems of Practice** brings leaders together to examine authentic challenges and develop practical solutions. Returning offerings include **Budget and Finance: Digging Deeper**, addressing critical financial decisions and fiscal challenges, along with courses in collective bargaining

and human resources that provide strategies for navigating complex negotiations, personnel matters and legal responsibilities.

Expanding Opportunities for Facilities Leaders

SCOPE is also expanding its Facilities Leadership Collaborative for new and experienced facilities directors and operational leaders, recognizing their increasingly complex role in school districts.

Courses address leadership, supervision, financial management, technology, staffing, capital planning and bond projects. Advanced offerings include **Tech Tools for the Trade 2.0: AI, Dashboards & Smarter Facilities Management**, **Capital Projects & Bond Management: From Planning to Closeout**, and **The Facilities Director as an Executive Leader: Budget, Board & Superintendent**. These programs strengthen technical expertise, communication and

leadership skills essential to effective district-level decision-making.

Professional Learning for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

SCOPE also offers an extensive catalog of pre-K-12 professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, providing practical strategies to strengthen instruction and respond to evolving student needs. Current offerings are available at scopeonline.us.

Learning With - and From - One Another

Perhaps the greatest value of the Leadership Collaborative extends beyond any individual course. When leaders from different districts come together, they exchange ideas, share experiences and build professional relationships that continue long after a workshop ends. Our goal is not simply to offer courses, but to create meaningful learning experiences that strengthen leaders and the organizations they serve.



CARLE PLACE

Key Club Creates Field of Honor for Sept. 11

In August, members of the Carle Place High School Key Club created a Field of Honor in the school's courtyard, featuring flags in recognition of the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11. The project was coordinated with the Carle Place Civic Association and builds on the Key Club's efforts last year, when members sold flags and donated the proceeds to support the Civic Association's upcoming 9/11 Memorial in the community.

BAYPORT-BLUE POINT

Remembering 25 Years Later

Schools throughout the Bayport-Blue Point School District marked the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11 with remembrances honoring the lives lost and helping students understand the significance of the day. James Wilson Young Middle School and Bayport-Blue Point High School featured exhibits with artifacts, historic news coverage and personal stories connected to the attacks. Academy Street, Blue Point and Sylvan Avenue elementary schools held outdoor ceremonies alongside



local fire departments. At the high school, 2,977 American flags covered the front lawn, each representing a life lost. Across the district, students reflected on the events and ensured the stories of those lost continue to be remembered.

HALF HOLLOW HILLS

Remember the Sky Murals Pay Tribute to 9/11

Students across Half Hollow Hills helped create murals in each school inspired by the clear blue sky that filled New York on Sept. 11, 2001. As part of the national Remember the Sky initiative, students were invited to write or draw on blue sticky notes, with their individual contributions coming together to create a collective



sky of remembrance. The project encourages students to reflect on Sept. 11 and share a moment of remembrance with a new generation.

WEST BABYLON

Tooker Students Remember, Honor and Reflect on 9/11

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11, students at Tooker Avenue Elementary School participated in age-appropriate lessons and activities centered on remembrance, heroes, kindness, courage and community. Across grade levels, students explored what it means to be a hero and reflected on the many people who demonstrated courage and compassion on Sept. 11, 2001, and in the days that followed. Through these meaningful activities, students learned



about, reflected on and honored the heroes who have made a difference, while carrying forward important lessons of kindness, compassion and unity.

WANTAGH

Sept. 11 Monument Dedicated on 25th Anniversary

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a new memorial was dedicated at Wantagh High School. The morning ceremony featured remarks and recollections from administrators and Board of Education members, a helicopter flyover and musical tributes. The monument features a 1:170 scale replica of the Twin Towers on a Pentagon base and contains the



names of 12 Wantagh residents and graduates who died in the attacks. Their names were read aloud, and flowers were placed at the base of the memorial in their honor.

MIDDLE COUNTRY

A Day of Fun at Summer ESY Social

Oxhead Road Elementary School hosted a 9/11 Hero Garden dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 11. The Hero Garden serves as a lasting tribute to the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and to the brave firefighters, police officers and first responders who continue to protect and serve their communities each day. The school community worked together over the past few months to build the living space as a special tribute to our heroes' courage, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to local and regional communities. The garden features a Unity Tree,



a path of inspiring hand-painted stones and a place for reflection. At the dedication ceremony, local first responders were recognized for their dedication and service to the community. Oxhead Road students recited poems and an essay that they had prepared for the occasion, and fifth grade students sang "God Bless America."

PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE

Students Explore American History and Civic Responsibility

In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11, Plainview-Old Bethpage students participated in a coordinated series of lessons exploring American history, citizenship and civic responsibility. Elementary students examined the Statue of Liberty, rules and government, while secondary students explored founding ideals, the Constitution and the impact of



Sept. 11. The series will continue on Election Day, when students will develop civic and media literacy skills by learning to identify trustworthy news sources and make informed decisions about candidates.

BETHPAGE

District Preserves 9/11 Stories

Bethpage social studies department head Erica Indenbaum and Director of Technology Andrew Choi wanted to mark the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11 by preserving the community's firsthand stories. With support from Assistant Superintendent Mike Spence, they created a 20-minute documentary featuring nearly 30 Bethpage staff members who experienced 9/11 as students, educators, first responders and family members. Bethpage High School students Luke Baumbach and Casey Christensen, along with Class of 2026 alumni Paridhi Miglani and Tara Gyaltsen,



conducted interviews and helped assemble the film. The documentary will become a teaching resource for Bethpage middle and high school social studies classrooms.



SMITHTOWN

Volleyball Teams Compete in Inaugural Outdoor Match

Smithtown High School East and Smithtown High School West took their volleyball rivalry outside on Aug. 31, for the first official outdoor high school volleyball match on Long Island. Held at High School East, the project was months in the making.

“Our East girls coach, George Alamia, came to me with this proposal,” SCSD Director of Athletics Jason Lambert said. “Took a lot of meetings, community support, and it finally came to fruition. It exceeded expectations. I didn’t know it would look this good!”

High School West senior Logan Singleton said he was blown away by the court, and High School East senior Brianna Cerullo said it was an amazing experience.



MANHASSET

Seniors Earn State-Level Leadership Appointments With NY Thespians

Two Manhasset seniors were recently appointed to state leadership roles with New York Thespians, the New York State chapter of the International Thespian Society which provides leadership and enrichment opportunities for student theater artists across the state. Regina McLean will serve as Junior Thespian Officer and serve on the NYC Outreach and Thespian Festival committees, while Parker Yuttal was appointed Social Media and Marketing Officer and will serve on the Eastern Long Island Outreach Committee.

ROSLYN

Orchestra Director Wins Prestigious Music Educator Prize

Roslyn High School orchestra director Douglas Aliano has been named the winner of the second annual North Shore Symphony Orchestra Long Island Music Educator Performance Prize, recognizing outstanding artistry and dedication to music education. Mr. Aliano was selected for his performance of Bottesini’s Concerto No. 2 in B Minor. As the prize recipient, he performed the work as



featured soloist with the NSSO on Oct. 4 at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City.



COPIAGUE

New Business Classroom Highlights Real-World Learning

Walter G. O’Connell Copiague High School has introduced a new space designed to expand opportunities for students in the business education department and provide an innovative, real-world environment for learning, collaboration and career exploration.

The new classroom is part of the district’s ongoing commitment to building a robust business education program that prepares students with the skills and experiences needed for success in college, careers and beyond. Its design reflects the state’s Portrait of a Graduate framework, which emphasizes critical thinking, effective communication, reflective and forward thinking, and global citizenship.



WEST ISLIP

Students Spread Kindness on Dolly Day

Elementary students at Bayview Elementary School and Paul J. Bellew Elementary School in the West Islip Union Free School District celebrated Dolly Parton Day on Sept. 25 by honoring the entertainer’s love of reading and her commitment to kindness and generosity. Held on the date which pays homage to her hit song “9 to 5,” students and staff at both schools were encour-

aged to wear pink in honor of Dolly Parton.

At Bayview Elementary School, students embraced the spirit of the day through activities focused on literacy and kindness. They created Dolly-inspired bookmarks and decorated the hallways with a colorful butterfly display. At Paul J. Bellew Elementary School, students participated in a book donation drive inspired by Dolly Parton’s commitment to childhood literacy.



ISLAND PARK

Students Participate in Operation Splash

Fifth grade students from Lincoln Orens Middle School in Island Park recently participated in Operation SPLASH (Stop Polluting, Littering and Save Harbors) in Freeport, helping clean up the bay while learning about the importance of protecting and preserving local waterways.



EAST ISLIP

Secondary Students Explore Constitution Through Interactive Lessons

East Islip High School and East Islip Middle School marked Constitution Day and Citizenship Day on Sept. 17 with social studies lessons focused on the rights, responsibilities and principles outlined in the U.S. Constitution. Students in grades seven, eight, 11 and 12 received pocket Constitutions and took part in a variety of activities exploring the document’s history and continued relevance. Lessons included examining Supreme Court cases and using the Constitution to defend opinions on how those cases should be decided, answering questions drawn from the U.S. citizenship test and participating in a Constitution-themed fact-finding challenge.



integrating technology into innovative learning. Great Neck uses iPads and other instructional technology to complement traditional classroom instruction, provide individualized learning opportunities and support student success.

GREAT NECK

Elementary Schools Recognized as Apple Distinguished Schools

Every elementary school in Great Neck Public Schools has earned the Apple Distinguished School designation. Lakeville Elementary was announced as an Apple Distinguished School in September; Parkville, John F. Kennedy and Saddle Rock elementary schools earned the title in the 2025-26 school year; and E.M. Baker Elementary received the honor in the 2024-25 school year. This recognition reflects the district’s commitment to thoughtfully



MINEOLA

High School Marks 25th Anniversary of 9/11 Through Service and Remembrance

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11, Mineola High School students, faculty and staff honored the National Day of Service and Remembrance by assembling more than 700 lunch bags for a local soup kitchen. The school community also gathered around its Survivor Tree for a ceremony focused on reflection, resilience and healing, reaffirming its message: “We Honor, We Help, We Heal.” This annual commemoration is organized by members of the school’s Student Service Center.



LONG BEACH

High School Launches New Barbering Program

Long Beach High School has launched a new Barbering program, giving students hands-on experience in barbering techniques while exploring career pathways in the industry. Under the instruction of BOCES barbering teacher Dan Wallace, the program combines practical learning with opportunities to develop essential workplace skills, including communication, customer service, sanitation, time management and entrepreneurship.



CONNETQUOT

Students Grow Their Independence With Let Grow Project

Helen B. Duffield Elementary School in the Connetquot Central School District kicked off the Let Grow Project, encouraging students to build confidence and self-reliance by taking on developmentally appropriate challenges on their own. That might mean a kindergartner learning to tie their shoes, a second grader making their own cereal or a fourth grader riding their bike



to school. As students complete their challenges, families fill out a leaf to add to Duffield’s “Let Grow” tree, creating a growing display of all the new things students are learning to do on their own.

DEER PARK

Elementary Students Make Their Mark on Dot Day

At the start of the school year, Deer Park elementary art students explored the message of “The Dot” by Peter H. Reynolds with art teachers Briana Fayans, Samantha Racano and Ashley Woolsey. Inspired by the book’s themes of encouragement, creativity and perseverance, students designed their own dots to contribute to school-wide collaborative displays. The celebration continued on Sept. 15, when students and staff wore polka dots in recognition of International Dot Day.



BALDWIN

Middle School Recognized as a Culture of Caring

The New York State School Boards Association has recognized the Baldwin Union Free School District with a Culture of Caring distinction for Baldwin Middle School’s Make-A-Wish initiative, which raised more than \$15,000 to support children with critical illnesses. Spearheaded by the school’s National Junior Honor Society, it brought together students, staff and the school community in a meaningful demonstration of compassion, service and leadership. The Culture of Caring distinction, part of NYSSBA’s Goodwill Recognition Program, celebrates extraordinary acts that demonstrate empathy, citizenship and a commitment to helping others.



HICKSVILLE

Middle School Hosts Welcome Back Bingo

Hicksville Middle School Student Activities recently welcomed students with an afternoon of Welcome Back Bingo. The event featured fun facts about teachers, clubs and activities, giving students an opportunity to learn more about their school community while enjoying some friendly competition.



OCEANSIDE

District Welcomes Back Staff With Style

There’s always a theme for the Oceanside School District’s Welcome Back Meeting, which kicks off Superintendent’s Conference Day. For 2026, Superintendent Dr. Phyllis Harrington and her planning committee persuaded administrators to perform “Magic to Do” from “Pippin,” tying the performance to this year’s district motto, “Magic in Every Moment.” Dr. Andrew Frey-Gould, director of media, fine and performing arts, led the vocals, while theater teacher Michelle Taplin choreographed and conducted the routine from in front of the stage.

Have school news to share?

Send it to Jill Gierasch at jgierasch@scopeonline.us or Andrew Hackmack at ahackmack@syntaxny.com.

A New Year Means New Opportunities to Excel!



By BOB VECCHIO
Executive Director
Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association

I have always loved the weeks leading up to a new school year. There's a sense of renewal; summer projects are being completed and the halls and buildings are all shiny and ready to receive our students with new hopes, dreams and expectations.

This is a time for our governance teams to put into motion both the short-term and long-term goal it has established for the upcoming year. It also carries a renewed sense of purpose, turning the page from the previous year, building on past successes and identifying where we have room for growth.

We know there is much work to be done going forward. We are living in

transformative times, with the rollout of NY Inspires and Portrait of a Graduate being implemented statewide. With changes come challenges; challenges are also opportunities for strong governance teams to shine.

We have much to be proud of for what has been accomplished in the past years. Let's use this as the foundation for continued success in the future.

Opening Doors Through Collaboration and Connection

By DENISE SULLIVAN
SCSSA President
Superintendent, Remsenburg-Speonk UFSD

This year, I find myself reflecting on why public education is so special. At its heart, it is about people. We build relationships, face challenges, navigate issues and commit to making a difference in the lives of students.

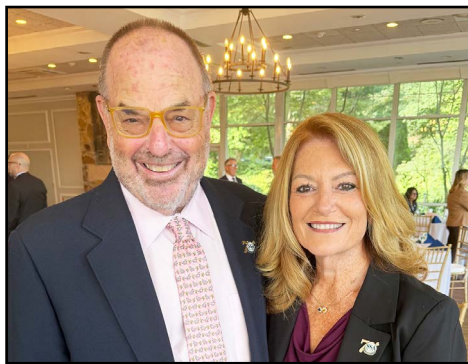
As president of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, I believe strongly that none of us should have to do this work alone.

Suffolk County is home to districts of every size, serving communities with unique resources, opportunities and challenges. Yet we are united by a shared commitment to our students and the responsibility that ensures every child can learn, grow and succeed.

That belief is at the heart of SCSSA's vision this year: collaboration, support and inclusion. SCSSA strives to be an association where every superintendent feels welcomed, valued and supported. Our region is filled with talented leaders, and we are stronger when we share our knowledge, experiences and ideas. As I enter my eighth year in the superintendency, I know firsthand how valuable it is to have colleagues who offer advice, encouragement or simply say, "I've been there."

This year, SCSSA will continue creating opportunities for fellowship, professional learning and meaningful connection. Collaboration does not mean doing things the same way; it means listening, learning and supporting one another.

Our collective voice matters. SCSSA will remain engaged in issues affecting our schools, including graduation requirements, the future of the New York State diploma, school funding and the attack on public education. We will advocate for the needs of



Suffolk County's public schools while recognizing the unique circumstances of each district.

Advocacy is only part of our responsibility. We must also celebrate the impact of public education in Suffolk County. The recognition of Lars Clemensen as the 2027 New York State Superintendent of the Year and Emiliano Geoninatti as the 2027 New York State Teacher of the Year is a wonderful reminder of the exceptional educators and leaders in our region.

SCSSA has also launched new Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn pages to share these accomplishments and highlight the incredible work happening in our schools. My goal is simple: make SCSSA a place where we support one another, where every superintendent is heard, and where we remain focused on what matters most, our students. When we listen, collaborate and lift one another up, we strengthen our schools and the future of public education across Suffolk County.



At their Oct. 14 meeting, NCCSS President David Schneider, right, honored Roger Tilles for his nearly 25 years of service as Long Island's representative to the New York State Board of Regents.

Nassau Superintendents Council Bridges 56 Districts

By DAVID SCHNEIDER
NCCSS President
Superintendent, Bethpage School District

Public education in Nassau County will once again maintain its intense focus on academic rigor, innovation and holistic student development. The Nassau County Council of School Superintendents will continue to provide a supportive, collaborative and dynamic network of educational leadership. Representing 56 public school districts across the region – alongside Nassau BOCES – NCCSS is guided by a shared vision: Leading for the success of all students. Together, as "56 Strong," we serve as the professional pulse driving educational policy, strategic collaboration and district leadership for thousands of students.

School district leadership is often a demanding, isolated role. NCCSS bridges individual districts by serving as a collaborative hub where district leaders address pressing educational challenges, share operational strategies and exchange best practices.

At our first meeting, NCCSS began tackling NY Inspires, mental health and wellness, fiscal sustainability, and school safety. We welcomed Nassau County Police Department Commissioner Patrick Ryder, who provided a thorough update on our collaborative relationship with local law enforcement and their intense commitment to working together to provide the best in school safety. We heard from our partners at BOCES about the recent updates in the ongoing work with NY Inspires. This collective approach ensures that while each district serves its own unique community, its leadership team has access to a shared knowledge base that strengthens each of our 56 Nassau County school districts.

Additionally, we have kicked off our Future District Leaders workshops. Led by our colleagues who share their experiences and insight, while fostering mentorship and elevating the professional standards of district administration, the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents serves as both an anchor and a catalyst. Its work ensures that Nassau County public schools remain places where instruction excels, community values are reflected and every student is supported to succeed.



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The Forum can be accessed online at

www.scopeonline.us.

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.