



Rye City School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear RCSD Parents and Guardians,

The Rye City School District was busy over the summer! Over the past two months, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel have been working hard to prepare for the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. We look forward to welcoming your students back on **Wednesday, September 4**, for the beginning of another successful year.

This year, the Board of Education and I intend to focus on delivering a student-centered instructional program that helps develop critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills, as well as empathy and self-awareness through emphasis on social-emotional learning. In addition, the passage of the capital bond resolution by the community of Rye in June paves the way for a period of design, architectural and engineering plan creation and submission, followed by a period of waiting for State Education Department Architectural Review Board approval.

Curricular Changes

At **Rye High School**, a new "Forensic Science" class is available to juniors and seniors in addition to the already-existing "SUPA (Syracuse University Project Advance) Forensics" class. The curricula for "Global US History" and "English Composition I" were revised and updated over the summer. As the High School prepares to shift to roll out a new schedule in fall 2020, the District has been conducting a curriculum review and audit of all classes to ensure incorporation of active learning and performance based tasks into student course work. This work will continue over the course of the school year.

At **Rye Middle School**, two new Project Lead the Way semester courses have been added: "Implementing Design and Modeling" for 7th graders and "Automation and Robotics" for 8th graders. Curriculum revision took place over the summer for grade 6 science courses, to be followed by grade 7 and grade 8 over subsequent summers.

At **Midland, Milton, and Osborn Schools**, students in grades K-5 will be introduced to a new Singapore Math-based math curriculum called "Math in Focus" this fall. Teachers have been busy learning about the new curriculum and materials over the summer.

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms will be rolled out more broadly across the District this year. The co-teaching model, widely in use at the Middle and High School and around the country, consists of classrooms with two teachers in each class. The District piloted two ICT classrooms at **Osborn School** last year, and is now ready to roll the program out to **Midland School**.

School Facilities/Technology Update

The District is currently creating 20 Design Teams spread between the **five school buildings**. Design Teams are comprised of faculty, administrators, and students who will work with architects and engineers to design the new educational spaces. If one or more of your students is interested in participating on a Design Team for a particular space or school, please have them reach out to Director of Technology Kaitlyn Sassone at sassone.kaitlyn@ryeschools.org

The turf field and track at the **High School/Middle School** are slated for replacement in June 2020, and the District has been busy getting the plans ready and up to Albany for State Education Department approval. The **High School** received all new desktop computers this year as part of the District's 5-year technology replacement cycle. Project Lead the Way classrooms also received new laptops, and the Digital Art Lab received new computers. Eight new Chromebook carts, each with 30 Chromebooks, were added to be shared between the **Middle** and **High School**.

The **Middle School** received all new desktop computers this year as part of the District's 5-year technology replacement cycle.

The Facilities Department was able to make some drainage improvements to **Midland's** North Playground over the summer. A site inspection after several early August downpours showed encouragingly dry results. **Midland's** gymnasium floor was completely resurfaced: stripped, sanded, re-lined and buffed to a mirror shine. All 2nd grade classrooms received new Acer Spin touchscreen Chromebooks.

At **Milton School**, six new faculty parking spots have been added around the front circle. The sidewalk along the front of the school has been extended to connect to the crosswalk so pedestrians need not walk in the driveway. All 2nd grade classrooms received new Acer Spin touchscreen Chromebooks.

At **Osborn School**, two new Interactive TVs were installed in 4th and 5th grade classrooms. All 2nd grade classrooms received new Acer Spin touchscreen Chromebooks.

Student and faculty bathrooms to be remodeled have been identified at **Midland, Osborn, RMS, and RHS**; work is expected to be completed next summer. Plans for the renovated auditoriums at **Midland** and **Osborn Schools** are underway and should be ready for submission by December.

Security Upgrades

The District was the recipient of a New York State security technology grant award this past spring, and grant monies are being used to install a new system of security cameras throughout **the five School District buildings**. In addition, the District is installing a new visitor management system that will require visitors to the **five schools** to present a government-issued ID prior to entrance. Visitors will receive a temporary badge to wear while on school grounds once they have passed a brief background check (similar systems are in use at many office buildings in Manhattan). Both the cameras and the visitor management system will be in place for the beginning of school in September.

Faculty Professional Development

While students are away from the classroom, many of the District's teachers go right back in. This year, 55 elementary teachers attended a two-day math institute at Milton School to prepare for the new Singapore Math-based elementary math curriculum, "Math in Focus," which launches Districtwide this fall.

In August, 18 elementary and secondary level teachers participated in three days of Project-Based Learning (PBL) training with Global Education Consultant Jill Ackers-Clayton. PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge. The 18 PBL fellows will continue to be trained in PBL teaching techniques throughout the school year.

Many teachers took advantage of the District's professional development courses over the summer, including technology courses on Google applied skills, infusing Chrome into teaching, using active learning stations, designing lessons using Hyperdocs, and promoting STEAM experiences. Other teachers took a two-day workshop on collaboration and co-teaching. K-5 literacy workshops were also on offer, including a class on creating and managing classroom libraries and a blended book study of *Understanding Texts and Readers* by literacy expert Jennifer Serravallo.

New Districtwide Administrators

In July, Julie Heller joined the District as the new Director of K-12 Literacy, responsible for coordinating professional development in literacy and writing instruction districtwide. Also in July, Dr. Erin Vredenburg joined the District as Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education. Ms. Amy Osooli joins the Special Education Department as Supervisor of Elementary Special Education, a new position. Ms. Osooli will serve as the point of contact for parents of elementary school students with disabilities and will coordinate the activities of teachers and support staff on students' behalf. Ms. Heller, Dr. Vredenburg, and Ms. Osooli are all conducting entry plans and invite parents to meet with them. Gerald Abbey joined the District in August as the new Director of Facilities.

Challenge Success

The District is in its second year of partnership with Challenge Success, a project of the Stanford University School of Education that seeks to redefine what success means to students, parents, and communities like Rye. This year, the District will have two Challenge Success teams: one in the **Middle School** and one in the **High School**. In September, a small group of faculty members, administrators, and parents will travel to Boston to undergo training at a Challenge Success leadership seminar.

Enrollment Information

The School District's enrollment has increased slightly. This September, we will welcome 226 kindergarten students, bringing our total student population to 3,258, versus 3,250 at the same time last year.

I hope you and your students have a terrific fall, and I look forward to seeing you at school and community events throughout the year. Don't forget to follow me on Twitter at [@EricByrneRCSd](https://twitter.com/EricByrneRCSd) for news and photos.

Sincerely,



Eric Byrne, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools