

SyossetPride

A Publication of the Syosset Central School District

www.syossetschools.org


CLASS OF 2017: *Excellence, Individuality and Humanity*

Approximately 540 seniors in Syosset High School's Class of 2017 took their turn at the podium to accept their high school diplomas during the school's 59th annual commencement held at Hofstra University.

This year's class was highlighted with 14 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, 33 Commended Students and numerous award winners in math, science and writing, as the 2016-17 school year commenced with a Blue Ribbon designation for Syosset High School by the U.S. Department of Education.

"You have had ample time to prepare for the future, but most importantly, as citizens of the world," said Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante to the senior class. "In addition to your academic achievements, you should be proud of the many schoolwide and communitywide humanitarian efforts you have organized to help shape your own character," he continued as he mentioned the volunteer soup kitchens, walkathons, nursing home visits and numerous other activities that the students participated in throughout their high school careers.

The evening featured inspirational speeches from Board of Education trustees Rob Gershon and Laura Schlesinger, both proud parents of Class of 2017 members. Superintendent Dr. Tom Rogers, class speaker Janvi Pamnani, valedictorian Yash Samantaray and salutatorian Ben Rhee also provided words of wisdom to the graduating class.

Dr. Rogers advised the students to balance their individuality with goals as they move on to a new school and new community of learners. "Continue to be yourself while committing to being part of something even greater than yourself," he said.

Class president Carly Battipaglia and vice president Benjamin Prevor presented the class gift: two stone chess tables for the school courtyard.

Dr. Durante honored students who received scholarly recognitions, including National Merit scholars, finalists and Commended Students, as well as the Intel Science Talent Search semifinalists, and Siemens Competition finalist. Members of Syosset's PTA/STA presented scholarship awards, as did members of SEPTA.



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Syosset, New York 11791

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Resident of
Syosset Central School District

A Message from Your *Superintendent*

Dear Syosset Community,

We hope that you're enjoying all of the wonderful things that summer on Long Island has to offer its residents: beautiful parks, sunny beaches, and endless recreational opportunities. Perhaps school is still a ways off in your thoughts, but rest assured, we've been focused on those first days of September when we welcome a new class of Kindergarteners, 6th graders and 9th graders to each of our schools, and when returning students meet their new teachers. With those students and their futures in mind, we've been planning a number of changes to enhance an already extraordinary educational experience.

The State's disproportionate emphasis on English Language Arts (ELA) and Math over the last several years marginalized Science and Social Studies in elementary school. So we've reacted to expand these subjects, not by squeezing ELA and Math, but by finding overlapping curriculum opportunities that, in the words of one of our principals, make the classroom "come alive." From 3rd graders applying engineering principles to fairy tales by constructing houses for the three little pigs that the wolf (in this case a hair dryer) can't blow down, to 5th graders constructing rafts to float Conestoga wagons across rivers (actually a giant tub of water) during the Westward Expansion unit, I've seen remarkable examples of teachers' ingenuity sparking students' creativity that has made our curriculum simultaneously more engaging, more expansive and more relevant.

Enhancing that work will require some small adjustments in the structure of the elementary day

to simultaneously maximize student time with our extraordinary teachers and to carve out regular opportunities for those teachers to collaborate on additional curricular enhancements.

As students move to the middle level, they'll find consistency as we infuse the Teachers College Reading and Writing program into 6th grade. They'll also build on their elementary technology experience with a full 1:1 Chromebook initiative. We'll be sending more information to middle school parents soon. Similarly, high school teachers have been taking advantage both of training and of expanded access to Chromebook carts as they plan their fall lessons. At all levels, our technology goal is not to maximize students' screen time, but to maximize their learning by ensuring that students use modern classroom tools and that teachers' imaginations are no longer limited by the scarcity of devices.

One opportunity this makes available is a K-12 computer coding program called kidOYO. Undoubtedly, many students will use this to learn coding skills as an end in itself, but we hope that all students develop a better understanding of "computational thinking" as a new form of literacy – understanding how computers "think" in a connected world where algorithms are an ever larger part of daily life.

To support all of this technology work, we've been creating a new wireless instructional network, repurposing the existing wired network to support our security, surveillance, and facilities infrastructure, and upgrading computers to run the latest (and most secure) operating systems. That's not the only infrastructure work taking place, as every summer we take advantage

of the opportunity to renovate our physical plant. In addition to new roofs at Berry Hill and Baylis, we're working on other aspects of the "Phase I" facilities projects approved by voters in May.

This fall, we'll be revisiting the remaining projects outlined in last September's presentation to the Board addressing Phase II building condition needs, safety and security projects, energy savings, and other facilities recommendations. We'll offer many opportunities for public engagement before seeking voter approval.

Lastly this fall, we will ask you to join us in welcoming a new "freshmen class" of sorts – teachers and administrators who will be joining the district, filling vacancies created by retirements and moves. We are thrilled to welcome such a talented group of people well-prepared to pick right up where their veteran predecessors left off.

It's been extraordinary to see so much activity among so many priorities, and it's exciting to think that an award-winning educational program is poised for growth in both facilities and instruction tailored to support our students and families.

Regards,

Dr. Tom Rogers
Superintendent of Schools



A Message from Your *Board of Education*

Dear Community,

This has been a year of extraordinary accolades for the Syosset Central School District. In the fall, administrators from Syosset High School traveled to Washington DC to accept the National Blue Ribbon School Award for the second time in the school's history. A few months later, Newsweek ranked the school #118 in the country and both US News and World Report and the Washington Post listed it among their top 200. Niche.com ranked the school district #16 in the country (with both middle schools in the top 10) and ended the year ranking the community as one of the top 2 places to raise a family in New York.

We couldn't agree more. Syosset is truly a wonderful place to live, and the heartbeat of this community is in its schools. To appreciate the opportunities in Syosset, we need look no further than the Class of 2017, whose graduation we celebrated just a few weeks ago, and whose accomplishments are recognized in these pages.

Those students aren't standing still, and neither can the District. To maintain and improve the level of education that has become synonymous with this community, the Board has focused on our schools' physical and technological infrastructure as well as shape our program to prepare our students for their futures. Your approval of the 2017-18 school district budget is making possible major technology infrastructure improvements that will position Syosset to take advantage of new educational technologies and support a much broader use of student devices, including a 1:1 Chromebook initiative in both middle schools starting this fall. In addition, the budget supports the roof replacements at both Baylis and Berry Hill elementary

schools occurring this summer along with a host of other improvements.

In addition to those facilities projects, your overwhelming support of the Capital Reserve proposition has enabled us to use existing reserve funds to begin implementing "Phase I" projects identified in our state-mandated Building Condition Survey (BCS). These projects address safety codes for walls and doors, enhance fire alarms systems districtwide and better control visitor access through security vestibules.

This fall we will begin considering the elements of Phase II, including the remaining safety projects identified as necessary by our architects in the BCS, along with other energy saving, safety, classroom renovation and athletic facility projects. A broad campaign of community engagement was key to the success of the Phase I proposition, and we are again seeking the input of all stakeholders, both parents and other residents. Our goal remains to propose Phase II for a public vote during the school year in order to begin the remaining safety projects as expeditiously as possible.

This spring, we were given a presentation on the planned expansion of instructional technology for 2017-18 including a 1:1 Chromebook initiative at both middle schools. The goal is not to increase students' screen time, but rather to find the unique opportunities where technology enhances students' opportunities. One such example will be kidOYO – a platform which allows students to learn age-appropriate computer coding skills in multiple languages – as early as elementary school and right through high school.

We are also engaging in conversation about issues like school start times, homework volume and the

changing Common Core Standards, both at Board meetings and at meetings with parent groups. You can refer to the district website (www.syossetschools.org) to learn more. We do appreciate your attendance at our monthly meetings and the feedback we receive during our Audience to the Public forum, where you can ask questions and express your opinion on matters related to our children and our schools. Public meeting dates and each Board member's email address are listed in the printed school calendar and on the website.

Finally, we would like to thank retiring members April Neuendorf and Laura Schlesinger for their collective 18 years of volunteer service. Both have been altruistic, caring, committed public servants who have put extraordinary personal energy into serving the children of Syosset through its schools. We wish them well and we congratulate their successors, incoming Board members Carol Cheng and Anna Levitan. We also congratulate Dr. Michael Cohen on his re-election and re-appointment to the presidency and to Ms. Tracy Frankel for her election to succeed Ms. Neuendorf as vice president.

Have a happy and safe remainder of the summer.

Warm Regards,
The Syosset School District Board of Education

Dr. Michael Cohen
Tracy Frankel
Carol C. Cheng
Chris Di Filippo
Andrew Feldman

Rob Gershon
Joshua Lafazan
Anna Levitan
Susan Parker

Technology Update 4.0:

Greater Integration, Improved Network All on Tap

Over the past few years, the district's Technology Workgroup has been exploring and experimenting new ways to utilize technology resources to amplify instruction and crosscut into all disciplines at every grade level. This includes guiding students to use technology tools and digital media more constructively, creatively and strategically to develop more evidence-based reasoning skills, incorporate more computational thinking and obtain and synthesize information better to purpose and task.

During the 2015-16 school year, 16 technology pilots were launched in different grade levels to identify the devices and best use of technology to suit the student population. At the onset of the 2016-17 school year, 53 different "adjacency pilots" were underway, all offshoots of the initial phase. These pilots, or projects, promoted a variety of concepts including active library learning spaces, flipped classrooms and blended learning, English language learner support and even "iPadding to independence" for students with special needs.

By the spring of 2017, 82 pilots were completed or winding down as teachers and staff stepped up with ideas on how to use Google Chromebooks and tablets in all areas of the curriculum. Summer workshops, colleague-to-colleague collaboration, on-site and off-site professional development and ideas shared through the Google Classroom platform all contributed to the effort. Now, as the 2017-18 school year approaches, educators at all levels in Syosset are ready to keep the momentum moving forward.

Every elementary student will have access to his or her own Chromebook throughout the day. At the middle school level, a true 1:1 environment

will begin, allowing students to extend their learning beyond the regular school day with the ability to use their assigned Chromebooks from home. At the high school, Chromebook carts will be available as learning opportunities are being designed at every grade level and content area to prepare students to be responsive, lifelong learners who take initiative for the benefit of their communities, society and themselves.

"We have moved from pilots to a comprehensive technology plan," said Deputy Superintendent Adele Bovard, who chairs the Technology Workgroup with Technology Staff Developer Christine Payne. Bovard cautioned against placing too much emphasis on the type or volume of hardware, but rather its use.

"It's not about the devices," she added. "It's about learning. There have been so many strong projects that Syosset teachers have developed this year, demonstrating how technology, when used effectively, can ignite curiosity and serve as a pivotal tool to maximize engagement in learning and equip students to make meaningful contributions in an ever-changing world."

Payne added that many of the teachers involved ran blended learning pilot programs, offering a mix of online and face-to-face classroom instruction. This allows students to control the time, pace and place of learning as they navigate their involvement in extracurricular programs and the overall rigors of coursework while maintaining a social life. The independence that comes with using a laptop device such as a Chromebook from anywhere, coupled with the features offered through the Google Classroom platform, align perfectly with the district's vision. Google Classroom is device-independent and can be used with a Mac, Windows or mobile device other than a Chromebook.

From a learning standpoint, it helps students develop organization and time management skills and fosters collaboration. It also allows teachers to post assignments and announcements remotely while giving students the ability to share feedback. Everyone involved in a class or project can see and contribute to the work in this space from his or her screen.

"It really is the ideal platform to share classroom information between teachers, students and parents," said Payne. "While Google Classroom helps students to communicate, collaborate and create more effectively, there is much more we hope to achieve



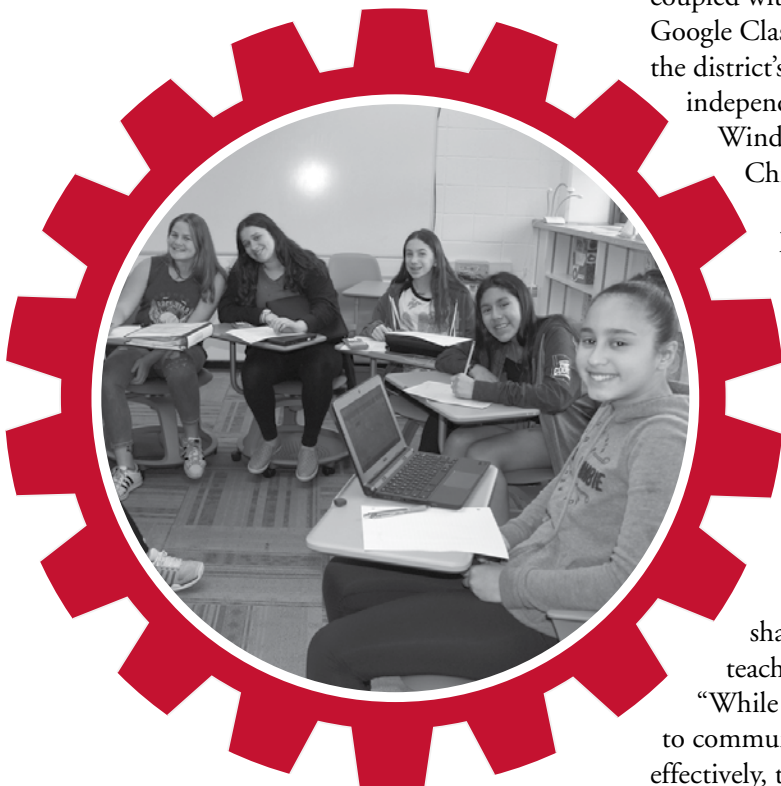
within our overall plan. We are looking for individual growth in our students...for them to be able to change with the times. We believe this type of learning environment is conducive to that."

Just as students must evolve, so must the physical infrastructure that supports all of this.

This summer, a new state-of-the-art high-density/high-bandwidth network is being built to meet the current needs and to accommodate more wireless devices while also providing the flexibility to support emerging technologies over the next 7-10 years. Following a technology study conducted by Nassau BOCES, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers and the Board of Education concluded that it was wise to build a new network rather than continue to invest in the aging one, which was designed to support a wired environment with student computers mainly in labs. Along with this, older desktop computers will be replaced with faster, more secure Windows 10 machines, initiating a new replacement cycle.

Dr. Rogers recently attended the International Society for Technology in Education Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Upon reporting back to the Board and community, he noted that he did not see any category of instructional technology usage that the district was not currently exploring. He also said that many districts of similar and larger size are implementing the same types of technology infrastructure changes currently underway at Syosset to accommodate the expansion of devices for education purposes.

"This is an exciting time to be a student, particularly in Syosset," said Dr. Rogers. "We have been ramping up to this moment the last few years, developing a plan that prepares every Syosset student for their future while building an infrastructure that allows us to keep up with the speed, scope and scale of digitization in the education setting and the workplace. Just as so many of today's careers are touched by technology, so are Syosset students."





SYOSSET HIGH SCHOOL 2016-17: *One for the Books*

September

- 14 Syosset High School seniors named National Merit semifinalists; 33 are named Commended Students.
- U.S. Department of Education names Syosset High School a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.



October

- Nine Syosset High School seniors named regional semifinalists in the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology.
- Three Syosset students are among 18 L.I. Scholar Artists honored by Newsday.



November

- Four Syosset High School students perform at the National Association for Music Education's All-National Honor Ensembles Conference.
- 14 Syosset student-athletes sign National Letters of Intent to play their respective sports at the collegiate level.
- Syosset Interact holds its annual True Blue Day to raise money for pediatric heart patients.



December

- Syosset High School sends 27 student-musicians to the New York State School Music Association Winter Conference, the most of any school in New York State.

January

- Four Syosset High School students named prize-winning scholars in the Regeneron Science Talent Search.

February

- 11 Syosset High School student-musicians invited to perform with the National Association for Music Education's 55th All-Eastern Honors Ensembles – the most in school history.



March

- Two Syosset High School seniors qualify as finalists for the International Sustainable World Engineering Energy Environment Project Olympiad.
- Syosset junior Iree Mann named New York State Poetry Champion, later placing third in the national competition.
- Syosset High School senior Vito Arujau wins his fourth New York State championship in wrestling, becoming only the second wrestler in county history and 10th in state history to earn this distinction.

April



- Syosset High School is ranked No. 24 in New York State and No. 173 nationally in U.S. News & World Report's 2017 study of the "Best High Schools in America."
- Six students from Syosset High School win first place at the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair.
- Syosset High School junior Sarah Wang wins a silver medal for poetry in the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards National Competition.
- Syosset High School's Virtual Enterprise International team Flip Chip wins second place in the country in the National Business Plan Competition.

May

- The Syosset High School Forensics Society wins the Best Overall award at the New York State Forensic League Championship.
- Two Syosset High School seniors win gold medals at the International Sustainable World Engineering Energy Environment Project Olympiad.
- Syosset High School finishes eighth overall at the New York State Science Olympiad.
- Syosset High School senior Rachel Doyle earns Highest Honor in the National PTA Reflections contest, one of only seven winners in the country.
- Syosset High School salutatorian Ben Rhee is named a U.S. Presidential Scholar.

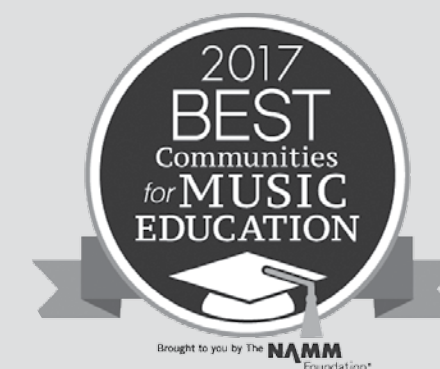
June

- Three students from Syosset High School win the National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Award in Writing.
- The Washington Post ranks Syosset High School No. 200 among America's Most Challenging High Schools.
- The boys tennis team wins their third consecutive county championship (52-0 in that span) on their way to the Long Island Championship title and the Team GPA award.
- Syosset High School conducts its 59th annual Commencement Exercises with a graduating class of approximately 540 seniors.

Best of Luck Seniors!

Districtwide in 2016-17:

- Niche.com ranks Syosset CSD the No. 5 school district in NYS and No. 16 school district in the country.
- The Syosset Central School District is honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from the NAMM Foundation.



Middle School Honors:

- Niche.com ranks both H.B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools in the top 10 in New York State.
- Three New York State Geography Bee finalists named, representing both H.B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools.
- H.B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools combine for 39 medals at the New York State Science Olympiad Finals, with South Woods earning the Best Small School award.



Meet The Val And Sal



"Yash and Ben are two exceptional students who we have already heard much about. In addition to being at the top of their class, they were very involved in their respective extracurricular activities and both have received numerous accolades. I'm sure there will be more great things to come from both of them and I wish them continued success in the future."

– Syosset HS Principal
Dr. Giovanni Durante

Valedictorian Yash Samantaray

Class of 2017 valedictorian Yash Samantaray was president of Mathletes, a three-time letter winner with both the varsity tennis and badminton teams, and a violinist in the school's chamber orchestra.

Musically, Yash was a New York State School Music Association Level 6 soloist, achieved All-County status twice and was selected for the Long Island String Festival Association's annual concert. He was also an executive board member and web designer for the National Honor Society.

Among his many awards and accomplishments in the areas of math and science, Yash was an American Invitational Mathematics Exam qualifier, won gold and bronze medals at the Al Kalfus Long Island Math Fair, and was a semifinalist in both the Siemens Science Research competition and a prizewinning scholar in the Regeneron Science Talent Search. He was also named a National Merit Finalist, a National AP Scholar and was a U.S. Presidential Scholar candidate. In giving back to his community, Yash participated in Piano for Patients, a student-run charity that performs for residents of nursing homes.

At graduation, Yash shared one of the most

important lessons that he found helped him through the rigors of his senior year, including the pressure of the college application process: "Enjoy every day." Yash also found his participation in the school's first boys badminton team "invigorating" and helped him complete his work at an "unimaginable pace."

"I'm not telling all of you to run out to a badminton court every time you get busy. Find something that makes you happy, always," he said. "Next time you are feeling stressed, don't try to squeeze in time for happiness. Make the time for happiness. It pays off."

Salutatorian Ben Rhee

Salutatorian Ben Rhee served as editor-in-chief of the high school newspaper "The Pulse," and served as senior class treasurer and vice president of Model Congress. He placed high in math and science competitions, including reaching the finals and semifinals in the national Chemistry and Biology Olympiads, respectively, along with being named a Regeneron prizewinning scholar and achieving multiple honors as a Mathlete.

Ben is musically talented, having played violin and serving as concertmaster in the

school's chamber orchestra. He was also the Chamber Music Club president and was selected for All-National and All-Eastern ensembles. Other musical honors include performances at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Recreationally, Ben enjoys tennis and volleyball and ran winter track in his freshman year. He was named a National Merit Finalist and a National AP Scholar of Distinction and was one of just three students on Long Island (161 nationwide) to be named a U.S. Presidential Scholar for achievement in his area of study. Ben volunteers at a local nursing facility as well as at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, having worked in the cardiology, neural connections and oncology units.

At graduation, he spoke of the uncertainty of being a freshman entering high school and the growth, interests, passions and callings that developed in each of his peers as time elapsed. "The wheels kept turning," he said. "And the uncertain, timid ninth-graders you probably saw on the first days of school were replaced by confident, motivated individuals, moving with purpose and flexibility."

LET'S MEET AT THE MIDDLE...

TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND THE MOST OF OUR OPPORTUNITY



A.P. Willits

As fifth-graders looked to a new chapter in their K-12 careers and a new home, whether H.B. Thompson or South Woods, one thing was clear: they will arrive well prepared for what lies ahead.

During their respective promotion ceremonies, fifth-graders at each of the district's seven elementary schools were honored with multiple awards, from academic awards to recognitions for their participation in student council, NYSSMA, the Nassau All-County Artist program and the character education program PRIDE.

Principals and teachers presented each student with a certificate to recognize their moving up from elementary to middle school. Some recalled this group's days as kindergartners, while others provided helpful suggestions for the future, such as make new friends and make the most of the increased programs available to them. Most importantly, they all conveyed confidence in their students' abilities to succeed and become caring, constructive members of society.

Congratulations to all of the fifth-graders on your move to the middle!



Walt Whitman



Baylis



Village



Berry Hill



Robbins Lane



South Grove

HEADING TO HIGHER GROUND...

WHILE CHERISHING THEIR TIME AT MIDDLE SCHOOL

More than 560 eighth-graders from H.B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools officially became Syosset High School freshmen during their respective moving up ceremonies at the Tilles Center at LIU Post.

Board of Education members joined Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers in congratulating and giving students words of advice as they prepare for the final stop in their K-12 careers.

South Woods graduate Jennie Dapice reflected on the sense of respect and community developed during the last three years, as well as the knowledge acquired to become productive, caring individuals.

"We learned that our ideas matter and that students can make a difference," said Jennie, touching on student efforts to benefit the Ronald McDonald House and Sunrise Day

Camp, and address the hunger crisis through food drives. She also reminisced about the many wonderful outdoor educational experiences, including Geocaching and fishing in the Long Island Sound, that she and her classmates had enjoyed.

In keeping with the theme of his school's ceremony, HBT graduate Samuel Kanterman spoke of the legacy this class will leave behind and the confidence and leadership skills they gained during their middle school years.

"HBT will forever be a part of us and now we will forever be a part of HBT," said Samuel. "Even more significant than the handprints we leave on the school are the handprints left on us."

Congratulations to the HBT and South Woods eighth-graders who are moving up, and best of luck at the high school.



H.B. Thompson



South Woods

• District News & Notes •

Register Your Child for 2017-18

If you're new to the district or if your child will turn 5 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2017, you may register him or her for the 2017-18 school year.

Registration is available by appointment only. The student registration office is located at South Woods Middle School, 99 Pell Lane, Syosset, NY. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday-Friday. Please call (516) 364-5669 to make an appointment.

The Student Registration Form is available in printable format on the district website, www.syossetschools.org. Click the "Parents/Students" tab and scroll down to "Student Registration" to access the form.

First Day of School

As a reminder, the first day of school for students for the 2017-18 academic year is Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Holidays Recognized on School Calendar

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the district will recognize Diwali, Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha as holidays on the school calendar. School will be closed on Oct. 19 and June 15 in recognition of Diwali and Eid-al-Fitr, respectively. Eid-al-Adha begins prior to the scheduled opening of school. School will also be closed on Feb. 16 for the Lunar New Year, which was approved as a holiday last year.



Thank You

During their final meeting as members of the Syosset Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers and Board of Education President Dr. Michael Cohen presented retiring Vice President April Neuendorf and trustee Laura Schlesinger with plaques of recognition for their collective 18 years of volunteer service to the district. Fellow Board members praised Neuendorf and Schlesinger as being altruistic, caring, committed, incredibly fair and smart, among other positive attributes. Dr. Cohen congratulates them here.

Welcome Aboard

The district welcomes two new members to the Board of Education, who were sworn in on July 5, 2017.

Carol C. Cheng has lived in the district for 15 years and has served on the PTAs at Village Elementary School and South Woods Middle School. She has three children attending district schools. Ms. Cheng was a consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers and serves on the Stony Brook Medicine Community Relations Advisory Board.

Anna Levitan has lived in the district for 10 years and has served on the executive board of the Syosset Council of PTAs and the council's budget committee. She has three children attending district schools. Ms. Levitan owns and operates a local test preparation and tutoring company.



SUMMER 2017

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Rob Gershon	Joshua A. Lafazan
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Dr. Thomas Rogers, Superintendent of Schools