



*Ronald D. Valenti, Ph.D.
Superintendent for Schools*

June 28, 2024

Dear Members of the Eastchester Community,

Since July marks the beginning of a new fiscal and school year, I'd like to broaden my regular Superintendent's Messages to a new category; "Complimentary . . . Not So Complimentary."

The Board of Education and I welcome letters, emails and overall community feedback. Some are complimentary, others are not, but that's OK. We can agree to disagree. My only criterion for taking communications seriously is that they be rationally founded, logically developed and evidence-based. Let me share two recent examples together with my responses. All communications were treated anonymously to protect confidentiality.

Complimentary

This writer was "so happy to hear . . . the district has finally given opportunities to all students to take Regents level classes."

This is from a parent of a struggling learner who believes Eastchester has for too long set "low level, low expectations," failing "to figure out how to raise the level of teaching and support."

Here are excerpts from my response:

Thank you for reaffirming Eastchester's new direction in raising academic rigor for ALL students, making Regents courses the DEFAULT option and opening AP, Global Language, Science and Math etc. to those students who need the additional supports.

Together with our new leadership team at EHS and EMS, we will work to advance and expand these academic goals.

We have already witnessed the positive domino effect of expanding Algebra Regents courses to 70% of our students versus 40%.

We now have more students enrolling in Geometry R and will provide the additional supports required. Likewise, with the expansion of Earth Science R in Grade 8 this coming September, we predict a positive expansion in 9th grade Science R and beyond in more rigorous Science courses. Our multi-year plan will reduce non-Regents sections in Science and Math, allowing more students access to solid Regents/Honors sections.



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The journey of increased academic rigor, improved student outcomes and enhanced college/career readiness has only just begun. But we have the right leaders in place to continue this momentum going forward.

Not so Complimentary

Some parents of athletes complained about our opening recruitment process for athletics to advertise on OLAS and Frontline, something we do for all other certificated positions.

Again, here are excerpts of my responses shared with all district coaches last month:

In opening the recruitment process for next school year, a question was raised regarding my May 23rd community letter. Specifically "Why are we looking for outside talent if . . . we know we have many great coaches, hired from current staff, who have built a foundational program we all take pride in."

The answer, while obvious to some, deserves clarification. When we take pride in a foundational program, the assumption is you keep the strong foundation built but commit to both strengthen the current foundation and to build out from that foundation.

It was not my intention to offend any current coaches. However, looking forward to next school year, we must recruit for vacant coaching positions, ranging from Modified to Varsity Sports. Additionally, we have included in next year's budget two new sports, Boys and Girls Basketball, Grade 8 and 9. An open recruitment process on Frontline and OLAS ensures we attract from our internal coaches as well as outside talent.

In addition to an open recruitment process, we must invest in a rigorous evaluation program that assesses each coach's performance each season and provides opportunity for growth.

Sincerely,

Ronald D. Valenti, Ph.D.

Superintendent