

February 6, 2023

Dear Rye Neck Families,

February

Martin Luther King, Jr. said “The function of education... is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.” That statement has been echoed by Rye Neck’s mission statement, but as I thought about Black History Month and our goal to provide an inclusive and equitable education for a diverse group of students, a visit to our elementary schools reminded me of something else he said.

Near the end of the “I Have a Dream” speech (it will be 50 years ago this summer) MLK expresses his hope that a diverse group of children could “join hands”. I spent some time visiting our K-5 students at Daniel Warren and F. E. Bellows last week and left with a real sense of community after seeing joined hands, literally and figuratively.

When I visit I often get queried about my identity. A teacher relayed a conversation overheard during a previous visit of mine to DW: one student said “he’s the king of Rye Neck”. “Who?” asked another. “The guy in the suit.” replied the first. Beyond the personal ego boost though, I get great joy in seeing our students together acting as a small community. While at FEB I saw one boy helping a friend with things that had spilled out of his locker. I saw a girl hold the door for another, then return to the door when she saw more classmates coming. Walking up the stairs at DW I passed a class coming down. A girl randomly stuck her hand out to give me a high-five, starting a cascade of more from the kids in line behind her. I politely declined when a student offered me some of his pizza in the cafeteria, grinning with a mouthful of cheese. This is the kind of welcoming environment that our students have access to.

High School Courses

Our students in grades 8 through 11 just finished the process of choosing their courses for next year. Although there is often a high degree of required classes, particularly for the younger grade levels, there is still choice for both electives and cores. Students had the opportunity to have conversations with their teachers regarding recommendations to prepare them to make their selections.

Please refer to the [23-24 Focus Elective Sheet](#) for a list of electives and the [2023-24 Course Catalog](#) for a description of courses.

Best regards,

Dr. Eric Lutinski
Superintendent of Schools