

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4
CHESTER • DEEP RIVER • ESSEX

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August 16, 2007

Dear Faculty and Staff,

“You’ve got to be careful if you don’t know where you’re going ‘cause you might not get there.”

This is a saying by the illustrious Yogi Berra, a former major leaguer and past manager of the New York Yankees who is renowned for his many convoluted, but somehow astute observations (please do not mistake me for a Yankee fan.) It is a peculiar statement from an unusual character but appropriate to my message as we begin a new school year together. That is, the importance of becoming a cohesive, mission-driven organization with a comprehensive PK-12 line of sight.

To translate the Yogi-ism, school districts of distinction establish goals and perform the hard work to attain those goals. In other words, school districts of distinction are mission-driven, learning-focused organizations. School districts of distinction intentionally align school goals, district goals, and board goals to cultivate the mission. School districts of distinction possess a clear picture of the goals they want to accomplish and a clear understanding of how they are going to accomplish those goals. School districts of distinction develop a roadmap to educational excellence with mileposts along the way to assess progress. School districts of distinction commit to a unified vision and then go about doing the hard work of making the vision a reality.

“We, the schools of Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4,
engage all students in a rigorous, challenging, and cohesive educational program.”

The above statement is the first sentence of the Mission Statement for the Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 school districts. The Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 schools are inherently linked by a common set of core beliefs, mission, and strategic goals established in April 2004 (please review our strategic goals and action statements on the district website www.region4schools.com.) These common goals serve as a roadmap for the boards, administration, faculty, and staff leading us toward a cohesive educational program that supports excellence pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. A key expression vital to our mission is the phrase “cohesive educational program.” This expression represents a fundamental condition for educational excellence.

The schools of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 are great schools individually. Each possesses talented faculty necessary for excellence in teaching and learning. Each provides excellent class size crucial to address a variety of learning styles. Each has dedicated staff essential to provide vital support and assistance. Each has gifted administrators committed to continuous school improvement. Each is privileged to work in a wonderful community supportive of education. We have the noble vision and mission. We have great students. All of the puzzle pieces are in place to achieve true educational excellence.

That is, all but one piece - a genuinely cohesive, mission-driven organization with a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through grade twelve line of sight.

This missing piece represents an urgent educational need for the children of Chester, Deep River, and Essex. If we are to become a school system of distinction, where all of the puzzle pieces fit nicely together to form a picture of true educational excellence for all students, then we must focus on becoming a cohesive, mission-driven organization. We must go beyond our conventions in our classrooms, schools, boards, and communities, and think with an expanded pre-kindergarten through grade twelve focus.

We are on our way to achieving true excellence as a region. The initiatives currently in place honor our mission and guide us toward excellence. Our curriculum, instruction, and professional development initiatives are examples. The new boards of education meeting design is another example. School districts of distinction intentionally align school goals, district goals, and board goals to cultivate the mission. School districts of distinction are mission-driven, learning-focused organizations. School districts of distinction commit to a unified vision and then go about doing the hard work of making the vision a reality. Let us become a cohesive, mission-driven organization with a comprehensive PK-12 line of sight.

You can help. Focus on our strategic goals. Concentrate on excellence in teaching and learning. Become part a vibrant professional learning community. Keep the best interests of children in your hearts, minds, and actions. Engage all students in a “rigorous, challenging, and cohesive educational program.”

I will close with another legendary Yogi-ism. “Ninety percent of the game is half mental.” We can do it if we believe we can do it. I look forward to seeing all of you at the opening convocation on Tuesday August 28th at 8:00 a.m. at Valley Regional High School.

Sincerely,



Kim M. Caron
Superintendent of Schools