

Dear Mrs. Augulis:

The Association would like to take this opportunity to provide you with our view of the current "State of Connetquot." The Association thought this would be an appropriate time to share our thoughts with you as we begin 2016. We have tremendous potential to build upon the great things we have done here for many years with our kids and for our community. Please accept the Association's thoughts and concerns outlined in this letter in the context they are intended. Each Board member knows it is our firm belief that the tone, direction, and message received by our teachers from administrators within the district starts with the Board of Education.

As we are all aware, there are many new administrators managing and overseeing the Connetquot Central School District. These administrators have come from various districts where they have implemented their policies and managerial styles. The Association and its members have witnessed many of these administrators implement or try to implement these same policies and managerial styles in Connetquot with some unintended consequences. Please allow the Association to elaborate.

Many teachers in this district have received the same message, through administrations actions and decision making, as well as through the spoken words used when delivering the message. It tells teachers that the way things have been done in Connetquot for years have been wrong and that the district needs to be "fixed." It is no secret that administrators have been hired recently with this belief in mind. The consequence of this belief is that changes are being made quickly without the adequate knowledge of the district and the relevant history of why things were done the way they were. The results are that those changes and policies are clearly not in the best interests of a sound education and have had an adverse impact on the morale of the very people who are on the front lines in delivering a sound education - the teachers. Please allow the Association to elaborate even further.

Some new administrators with minimal time in the district have made changes or are considering making changes, when the very teachers who these changes affect were never consulted, and worse yet, were never notified of the changes until the last minute. It is not hard to understand that a teacher with 25-30 years of experience and a long history of service to the district would feel less than respected when they are told that they need to do something different without any input or prior notice. Many times these changes are made by someone with much less experience than those they impact and whose administrative title is the only qualification they possess. Teachers see this kind of management style as a lack of appreciation for their knowledge, experience, and expertise, as well as a clear lack of respect.

The results are that teachers will have less loyalty to the district, while their feelings of alienation from the district increases. Keep in mind that the Connetquot School District has a long history, well before any current administrator came aboard, of providing a sound education to all of our students and has had a very positive reputation.

Change is not a bad thing. It is not wrong when it is educationally sound, is done with adequate knowledge, and includes input from and shows respect for teachers. Change that is done for the sake of change or is done based on ego or for the sake of adding to a resume, hurts children and

hurts morale. The evidence of the damage that occurs might not be seen today or tomorrow, perhaps not even within the next few years, but over time, it will erode the foundation that has made Connetquot the fine district that it is. The Association continuously hears that, "this is not what we intended to happen" or "we don't want teachers to feel this way," yet this is what happens much too often.

The Association urges administrators to slow down, understand the workings of the district first, give themselves time to see what programs work and what programs do not, understand the history of the district and include teachers in the change process if and when it is thought to be needed. Knowing the history of the district and respecting that history are two very different things. Administrators who respect it have a much better chance of being successful, as their success can only occur with the full support of their teachers, compared to those who do not.

Administrators are free to take the Association's advice or ignore it; however doing the latter will not likely lead to optimal cooperation from the teachers, which will not allow for improving the education of the students in this district.

Sincerely,

Tony Felicio, Jr.
President
Connetquot Teachers Association

CC: BOD
 CO Administration
 Building Principals
 Membership