



Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

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Constance D. Evelyn, Superintendent of Schools

A Message from your Superintendent

I want to take this opportunity to recognize and commend the entire Valley Stream District Thirteen community of educators and families on their support of inclusive education. Our definition of inclusion aligns with the district's vision and belief statements and embraces a mindset and culture that encourages all scholars academically, socially, and emotionally.

Valley Stream Thirteen Definition of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education celebrates every child's unique strengths, while embracing them within an environment that supports growth academically, socially, and emotionally. Instruction is differentiated to guide and support children's development as they acquire skills to successfully meet their individual challenges and goals. Inclusive education understands that all children are important members of the community and accepts a shared responsibility for preparing children to succeed to their fullest potential, within and beyond our school community.

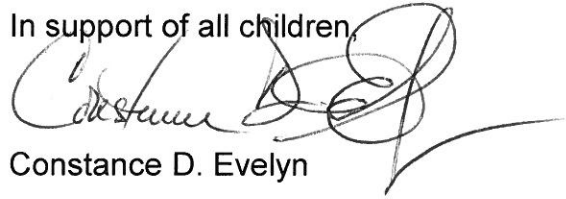
This year, we have been able to successfully expand and enhance inclusive practices by increasing the number of full-day and half-day integrated co-taught classes district-wide. This has enabled students to be appropriately supported in less restrictive environments, consistent with a long-standing vision of the district. While the inclusive co-teach model benefits many, we recognize that a *one size fits all* model cannot adequately meet the needs of all students. The district is committed to sustaining the provision of a continuum of services including self-contained and gifted and talented classes. Teachers are encouraged to use their professional judgment when determining whether push-in or pull-out support is warranted and to make accommodations for the varied learning styles of their students. It is our pledge that we continue to provide environments that are nurturing, safe, and conducive to learning to ensure students are actively engaged learners.

Professional development has been an important component of our inclusive initiative and has been consistently provided both in and out of classrooms throughout the year. Staff developers have often remarked about our teachers' professionalism and enthusiasm, and praised the district for having the best interests of teachers and students at heart.

Our district-wide Inclusive Education Committee meets throughout the year to evaluate our ongoing work. At our last meeting, we were all very moved by the words of a parent who has children receiving various levels of support throughout the district. She tearfully submitted, "I saw the passion and desire in everyone today. You all pour so much into our children and it's really admirable. Inclusion was an idea, and to see it implemented and everyone's desire to perfect and tweak it; it was the first time I really truly understood the heart of an educator."

It is my honor to continue this work with our dedicated team of educators and community members in our efforts on behalf of all students.

In support of all children,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Constance D. Evelyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Constance D. Evelyn