

Rachel Carson Intermediate School 237Q
Magnet School for the Arts
Achieving Academic Excellence through the Arts
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Dear Parents/Guardians:

At I.S. 237, we are teaching our students to **W.A.V.E.** - that is, to use **Written and/or Verbal Evidence** to explain and support their opinions, claims and solutions to problems. Using **evidence** to support a position is the basis of **argument construction**. As defined in the *New York State Common Core Standards*, "An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer's [speaker's] position, belief, or conclusion is valid." The *Standards* place particular emphasis on students' ability to formulate sound arguments, because this ability is essential to helping students become College and Career Ready.

In 2013-14, we launched our W.A.V.E. initiative and made significant progress in helping students develop better written arguments. This year, we want to improve students' abilities to demonstrate their understanding and appropriate use of evidence and prior knowledge as they answer questions and engage in classroom discussions. Therefore, our School-wide Instructional Focus is the following:

In classroom discussions and in written work, students will demonstrate understanding and appropriate use of evidence and prior knowledge to support their claims and/or solutions to problems.

Teachers of every subject consistently reinforce our instructional focus so that all students are aware of it and can clearly explain it. Parents can help support our efforts by checking your child's written work and engaging in discussions about books, newspaper or magazine articles, current events, and/or controversial topics with your child. When engaging in discussions or conversations with your child, you might ask the following:

- **How do you know?**
- **Is there any evidence from the text to which you can refer or show me?**
- **Do you think others might have a different opinion or perspective? (opposing view)**
- **What evidence do others have to support their views?**
- **How might this situation be resolved?**

We will continue to do our best to ensure that your child knows how to **W.A.V.E.** and is well-prepared for high school and beyond. With your continued help and support, we know that we will be successful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,

Judith Friedman, Principal