

Dear New Rochelle Parents of Model Congress participants,

For more than 50 years New Rochelle has hosted our Model Congress, educating our students to become our next generation of leaders. Model Congress teaches students about how our democracy functions, providing them with lessons in how to put forward and advocate ideas, resolve differences through compromise and diplomacy, and forge life-long bonds with students from different backgrounds and different homes. In short, it teaches them how to effectively communicate, advocate, and seek resolution.

That's why we were disappointed and outraged to learn that several schools on Long Island were declining to send delegations to New Rochelle's Model Congress on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. This decision was made without warning and with virtually no communication. It runs counter to every lesson that our students learn at Model Congress.

Our student leaders in New Rochelle High School's Model Congress have been communicating with students at Hewlett, Oceanside, and Lawrence who believe New Rochelle has a great model Congress and want to attend. Consider this quote from Austin Kornbluth from Wantagh who says:

*"I've been going to congresses for 4 years now. The new Rochelle delegates have been nothing but kind and respectful no matter where they are....I feel completely safe in going to New Rochelle as do my parents. I have welcomed dozens of New Rochelle delegates into my home in the past 4 years and they have been some of the most respectful, kind, safe people I have met. It is a shame to see that schools are pulling out but if we were allowed to go, myself and the members of tri-d Wantagh would feel nothing but safe and overjoyed to be there for the full weekend."*

We couldn't agree more.

That's why we are proud to stand behind our students who have [invited the 8 superintendents](#) to visit New Rochelle High School at 10 a.m. on February 26. True to the lessons of Model Congress, they believe if a school administrator is going to walk back on a commitment to send a delegation, they should at least visit the school first to so the decision is an informed one.

We have been reaching out to the Principals and Superintendents of the Long Island schools to reinforce our students' message that their decision should be thoughtful and well-informed, and to urge them to reconsider for the benefit of both our school communities. Model Congress is about bringing people together to engage in discourse; to self-isolate as a reaction to unvalidated perception is antithetical to that purpose.

We will keep you posted about these efforts, and how you might also lend your voice if needed to encourage a higher quality dialogue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian G. Osborne  
Superintendent

Reggie Richardson  
Principal