



Bolgen Vargas, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Rochester City School District
131 West Broad Street
Rochester, New York 14614

July 28th, 2014

An Open Letter from Dr. Vargas to the Monroe High School Community

Dear Colleagues, Students, Families, and Friends of Monroe:

Today I have assigned a Principal who is uniquely qualified to lead the James Monroe High School community at this time. **Vicma I. Ramos, Ed.D.**, will return to serve as your Principal beginning next month.

Dr. Ramos led Monroe as Principal from 2008 to 2011, with gains in ELA and math scores and improved student behavior during her tenure. The most recent state graduation data is based on students she served in eighth, ninth, and tenth grade.

For the past two years, Dr. Ramos has done a stellar job as the District's Executive Director of Student Placement and School Operations. She has been a top performer in other District assignments. In her new role, Dr. Ramos combines a deep knowledge of Monroe with education expertise and an inclusive leadership style to spark rapid improvement. Letting her "return home" to the school she loves is a sign of my commitment and concern for the students, staff, and families of Monroe.

I also have high regard for Principal Armando Ramirez, who will be serving the District elsewhere in a new assignment. Because of my respect for him, it was painful and embarrassing that my plans for reassignment became public before I spoke to Principal Ramirez personally. This was a deeply regrettable mistake for which I am ultimately accountable. I have apologized publicly after having the opportunity to speak with him privately about it.

As the leader of this District, it is my job to determine when change is required for schools to meet their improvement goals. Whether you agree or disagree with my decision, the passion it generated can be a positive force. **Every member of the Monroe community must pull together now to implement the school's improvement plan under Principal Ramos.**

I am confident Dr. Ramos is the right person to lead this effort, but she cannot do it alone. Students, parents, staff members, community partners and others who support the school must commit to the "ABC's of achievement."

- **Attendance.** Monroe needs significant gains in daily attendance and participation in the extended day program. Students will not achieve unless they attend school and take advantage of available support.
- **Behavior.** Dr. Ramos will implement restorative justice practices that require students to take responsibility for proper behavior. I expect students to embrace this opportunity by

treating adults and each other with respect. Adults in school must provide guidance and enforce discipline rules strictly and fairly.

- **Course completion.** Parents and other caring adults need to set high expectations for students to put forth their best effort in class, as Monroe's teachers must work to provide the best possible instruction.

When classes resume September 3rd, Monroe will be entering the second year of a three-year improvement plan funded by the state. **Simply put, your school is not demonstrating adequate progress.** If Monroe fails to make significant gains this year, we can expect state action soon, similar to the directive East High School received last March.

Your school has what it needs to accelerate progress and avoid sanctions. Monroe students are as smart as students anywhere, served by talented teachers and staff. The District and the State Education Department are providing additional resources to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students—including the restoration of a Redjacket football team that will take the field this fall.

In Dr. Vicky Ramos, you have a new Principal familiar with the school's challenges who is fiercely dedicated to bringing these elements together so that students succeed. With support from the broader community, let us work together to make Monroe High School a success story that makes us all proud.

Sincerely,



Bolgen Vargas
Superintendent of Schools