

"Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it by the handle of anxiety, or by the handle of faith."

Anonymous

Grey Matters

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A very good weekend for football. While you couldn't pay me enough to go to sit in the cold and watch the game in person, the Patriots victory was great to watch on TV. After the Panther win in double overtime, I had serious doubts as to the quality of the Pats' game; it proved more than close enough to be a great game. It is so often the case that the Playoffs are far more enjoyable than the SuperBowl itself. We shall see.

On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week, the visiting Committee from the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) will be at RJG learning about our school. After reading through all the student, staff, and parent surveys, the visiting committee will be here to see for themselves. After a welcome breakfast with the staff on Tuesday morning, the visiting committee members will spend the next three days watching us go about the business of education. They will visit classes, team meetings, eat in the cafeteria, and meet with staff, administrators, members of the School Council and the School Committee. Their focus during this process will be to look at the school in terms of the following:

- 1) Creating a community for learning
- 2) Teaching a core of common knowledge
- 3) Ensuring success for all students
- 4) Empowering teachers and administrators
- 5) Preparing teachers for middle grades
- 6) Improving academic performance through better health and fitness
- 7) Engaging families in the education of young adolescents
- 8) Connecting schools with communities

Once they have completed their visit, they will take all that they have learned from our surveys and what they have learned first hand, and create a report in which they will make a series of commendations and recommendations within each of the above categories.

While it is completely reasonable to be somewhat apprehensive about participating in any type of evaluative process, I am confident that NELMS will agree that RJG is an outstanding school with the most amazing teachers in the country. I am thrilled by the opportunity to have a set of professionals look at how we do our job and help us identify what we do well, what we can do better, and provide us with support and feedback we need as we decide what type of school we want to be.

Hats off to Steve Desy, Bob Daley, and rest of the facilities personnel. They have put in endless hours addressing problems and monitoring the heating systems in all the buildings on campus to assure a warm and safe environment for everyone. While they sometimes feel that they are invisible unless there is a problem, we all owe them a great deal of gratitude!

Stay warm and have a great week.