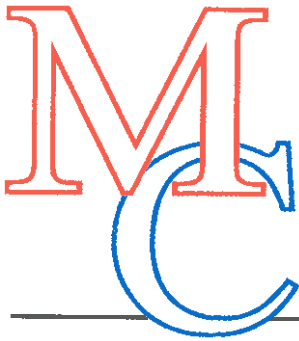


MIDDLE COUNTRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
AT CENTEREACH

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Roberta A. Gerold, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Francine McMahon, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction
Beth A. Rella, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Business
James G. Donovan, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

May 13, 2024

Dear Middle Country School District Community,

I would like to address the recent report in *Newsday* regarding the maintenance of our district cafeteria facilities. In particular, I would like to address information in the article that did not put into clear context the nature or the frequency of infractions across our entire district.

While in no way do I want to discount the seriousness of the food service violations cited, I do want to note some mitigating circumstances that were not mentioned in the article. *Newsday* cites 200 violations for Middle Country over seven school years – 2017 through 2023. While this may seem like a large number for a single district, *Newsday* does not mention or make clear that our district has 14 school buildings, each with its own cafeteria. Over the seven school years, this amounts to approximately two infractions per cafeteria per year.

Notably, the district has never been cited for rodent or roach infestations. Additionally, nearly all of the violations were non-critical in nature, meaning that they were largely for issues such as labels being missing, trash receptacles with open lids, sinks needing additional cleaning, and other machinery and general facility maintenance issues. These were not infractions that related to the quality of the food served our students or the cleanliness of the cafeteria space our students dine in. We are constantly striving to maintain clean and safe facilities for our students, and took immediate action to remedy those infractions that were brought to our attention. We will continue to work with food service vendors, cafeteria personnel and maintenance staff to ensure that our facilities continue to meet all requirements set out by local and state health departments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roberta Gerold".

Dr. Roberta Gerold, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools