



Dear Colleagues,

All schools strive to create and maintain the best educational climate possible, thereby promoting an elevated level of excellence in teaching and learning. Our mission at Frank D. Paulo Intermediate School 75 is to provide an educational program that enables every child to master the skills needed to become a highly productive and caring citizen through a well-defined, differentiated, engaging, and meaningful curriculum, tailored to our unique school setting.

At the heart of our mission is our extraordinarily popular debate program.

When we first considered adding debate to our offerings, we did not anticipate the overwhelming turnout and subsequent popularity of the program. We expected 10 to 15 students to join who would compete and benefit from the many skills developed throughout the process of debating. Students were immediately drawn to debate, and we have maintained a roster of 50 to 60 students each year for the past seven years.

The essence of debate is to assure that each student realizes whatever unique potential they may possess and prepares both academically and socially to pursue rewarding college and career paths in this challenging 21st century world. In preparation for competitions, students hone their critical thinking skills, learn to research from credible sources, and articulate their thinking in a clear and coherent manner. While engaging in the process, they develop the ability to react to unforeseen circumstances, regulate their emotions, and comprehend the impact of their body language. The growth of student confidence and social skills are an inevitable byproduct of debate as collaboration and camaraderie are essential elements of a winning team.

By engaging in debate, students learn to critically examine a wide array of important topics in our society and formulate research-based presentations to support arguments on both sides of a discussion. As a result of arguing both viewpoints, debaters develop critical thinking skills that enable them to formulate their own opinions based upon thoughtful consideration of all facts. This ultimately cultivates empathy, cooperation, tolerance, and appreciation of the political beliefs and cultural heritage of different people and civilizations.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Zapata

Kenneth Zapata
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2022 NSDA Middle School Administrator of the Year

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