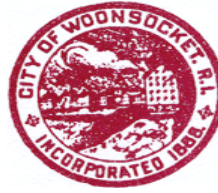


CITY OF WOONSOCKET
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Dear Woonsocket Educators,

I wanted to write you a letter to say thank you for all that you do for Woonsocket and for our youth. We all have different jobs and duties but we are all public servants to the youth of Woonsocket. We are all in this together.

Educators have helped to shape my life significantly and they do so for every student who passes through the classroom. I have so much faith in our public school system not only because I am a product of our schools but also because I believe in our educators. Public school teachers have one of the toughest jobs in the country. Through the best and worst of times, I am reminded of their unwavering resolve to keep the best interests of their students at heart. We have faced many difficult times during my service on the School Committee and it seems that it may get harder. I have every confidence that working together is not only the best way to address Woonsocket's educational future; I believe that it is the only way. We teach and serve because we believe that through molding young minds we will create a brighter future for Woonsocket and beyond. Most importantly, we teach, serve, and inspire because we believe in the youth of Woonsocket. The youth of this city deserve to be surrounded by as many examples of hard work, dedication, and cooperation as possible. This is an environment that I hope to nurture in further service to the Woonsocket School Committee.

In this field, inspiration is everything. I am inspired by all of you who work directly with our youth everyday. I see and empathize with the pressure and weight put on you each day as you step into a classroom. I ask that you always remember why you are doing this. Always remember your mission and always try to be the best version of you. I ask you to impart this notion to your students. The youth of this city need you to be the best person you can be as well as the best educator you can be. Although we will never fully understand why some children are a certain way, it is our responsibility to educate them to our best ability when they are in our care. I understand that there are many obstacles in the way but we cannot make excuses in this endeavor. Failing Woonsocket's youth is not an option.

Education is one of the most important investments one can make in life. I began my formal education as an ESL student at 5th Avenue Elementary School. My parents did all they were capable of doing but as newcomers to the country they faced many obstacles and language barriers. They put their trust in the school system to educate me and the school system did not fail them. So many of our students face the same obstacles and they all have the same opportunity to be successful. I do not believe I am anyone special. I believe I am fortunate. I am fortunate to have been surrounded by great educators and mentors who challenged and encouraged me to be the best person I could be. I was lucky to have teachers who were willing to put in extra time if I had questions. I was lucky to be surrounded by caring adults. I believe that all youth should share that same fortune.

At the end of the day, we are all on the same team; we all want what is best for our youth, we can change their lives, and we can create a better future for this city. I believe that we need to work as a mission-driven team. We need to perpetuate a culture of professionalism to ensure that our schools function efficiently. I encourage you to reflect everyday and laugh often. Keeping in good spirits is important.

I believe in you and I believe in our schools. If we work hand in hand to support each other, we will be the envy of the state with all that we accomplish. I wish you all the best of luck as you jump into a new school year. Remember that you have a whole year to make an impact on the lives of so many young people. Remember to strive to make that positive impact, no matter the size, everyday.

I am here to support you and the youth. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have ideas, questions, or concerns. I look forward to hearing your input.

Ways to contact me:

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Always,

Vimala D. Phongsavanh

"What nobler employment, or more valuable to the state, than that of the man who instructs the rising generation." **Cicero**