Dear Spackenkill Families, Students, and Staff,

There is no school on Monday, January 16 to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr King once said, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education.” Those eloquent words bear remembering and most certainly apply to our school district. In this edition we salute a career educator, Ann Gabel, who personifies Dr. King’s words. It is also our expectation that Alaina Repetto, who recently received tenure by the Board of Education, will embark on a career as distinguished as that of Ann Gabel. We are grateful for the Lions Club, which supports our high school’s chapter of the LEO Club. The community service work of the LEO Club, their advisor, Mr. Hammond, and the Pleasant Valley and LaGrange Lions clubs certainly underscores the importance of intelligence plus character. In addition, our young scholars at Todd are developing their critical thinking skills in mathematical reasoning, and we encourage them to continue their quest to be great math students.

Sincerely,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.
Interim/Acting Superintendent

Congratulations to elementary special education teacher Ann Gabel, who is retiring after 23 years in the Spackenkill District at Hagan and Nassau schools. Mrs. Gabel looks forward to traveling and spending time with her grandkids. “Ann has always been dedicated to her students, their families, her colleagues, and the Spackenkill community,” said Dr. Lori Mulford, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Pupil Personnel. “She brought humor and art into her work with students. Ann always had a way to bring a smile to your face and make you laugh. Ann’s dedication to and love of children was apparent every day. Evidence of Ann’s dedication is that fact that she postponed her retirement so that her students had two transitions of teachers instead of three. She will be greatly missed.”
We want to commend the 13 problem-solvers from Todd Middle School who participated in the 32nd annual American Mathematics Competition for middle school students (AMC 8) on November 15, 2016. They are: Taha Ali, Nicholas J. Busaba, Emily Jea, Anikha A. Justin, Soumya Kamada, Emily Ma, Jonathan Raz, Jeet Shahani, Aditya Shankar, Shinrea Su, Edison Sung, Eric Sung, and Anoushka Swain.

Special congratulations go out to eighth grader Emily Ma, sixth grader Jeet Shahani, and eighth grader Aditya Shankar for their achievements on this exam and receiving the top three scores at Todd.

Emily Ma, who earned the title of School Winner, received the highest score achieved by a Todd student since we began administering the AMC 8 in 2009. Her exceptional performance places her in the top 1% among students taking this test nationally.

The AMC 8 is a 25-question, 40-minute, multiple-choice examination organized by the Mathematical Association of America and designed to promote the development and enhancement of problem-solving skills. Participation in this exam helps middle school students enhance their analytical thinking skills and develop positive attitudes toward mathematics. Students are able to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to unique problem-solving challenges in a comfortable, stress-free environment.

The Todd Middle School Math Club, under the guidance of Mrs. Cindy Nguyen, participates in many challenging math competitions throughout the year. We are proud of all our participants.