

OUR VIEWS

Opinion

Intentional improvement

A well-earned salute
to a Mt. Vernon school

State Education Commissioner Richard Mills made it a point to stop at Lincoln Elementary School in Mount Vernon during a swing through Westchester on Monday. The visit was part of Mills' agenda to personally salute academic advancement in urban school districts across the state.

Lincoln certainly qualifies. With 100 percent of its students passing the state's standardized fourth-grade math test and 99 percent successful on the English Language Arts assessment, Lincoln was among the top-scoring schools statewide. More than half the student body is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a poverty indication, and 25 percent of the students have limited English proficiency.

Mills praised Lincoln's veteran principal, George Albano, the high caliber of

the faculty and high expectations of student performance in an atmosphere that encourages literacy.

"The principal was utterly devoted to the success of each student, and it showed," Mills said. "It's a happy place, and it's a serious place and you can see that the improvement is intentional, with educators there focused on data."

Mills' high marks are the latest given to the Mount Vernon district. In September, two Mount Vernon schools — the Columbus School and the Martin A. Traphagen School — were named No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Education Department. They were the only public schools in Westchester so named and among only 11 in New York state and 256 nationwide to be so honored.

The achievements at Lincoln, Columbus and Traphagen give other Mount Vernon schools — indeed, schools everywhere — a model of success to learn from.