

For my closing remarks I'd like to leave you with three messages:

"Hope" "Action" and "Blueberries"

First Hope and Action:

A few weeks ago we had the privilege of attending the joint Rockland County & Westchester Dinner where Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, was the guest speaker.

In his book, [Jefferson's Children](#), Mr. Botstein talks about hope. He says that many people use hope in a passive manner – Hopefully something will happen ... the best use of "hope" is the active use.

All of the people in this room tie "Hope" to "Action".

We remain optimistic in spite of late budgets, increasing enrollment and cramped quarters, unfunded mandates and the like because we believe that our actions will make a difference.

We see you, our legislators, as an extension of our will – our actions trigger and support your actions.

Botstein says... "education is a precondition of hope. Without the command of language—and, by inference, thought, ideas and knowledge – hope disappears or become meaningless. ...this belief places education even more into the center as priority for this country.

Hope for ourselves, our children and our world is contingent on education.

The time has come to set pessimism aside and create an educational system in this country adequate to enable future Americans to hope, and with that hope, to take responsibility for themselves and the well-being of our society and culture." (pp. 27-28 Jefferson's children)