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Neil Gleason: Midvale-Lincoln is a success story

A letter to the editor
June 9, 2006

Dear Editor: Finally, a positive story about the wonders of Midvale-Lincoln Elementary School, a mere 22 years after the fact ("Parents, staff say Midvale defies stereotypes," June 7).

My oldest was a first-grader when Midvale and Lincoln were paired in 1984. We still chuckle about his apprehension at attending a Chinese immigrant classmate's birthday party ... what would he eat? But not to worry, the pizza was excellent.

And I vividly recall the widespread condescension toward the paired school's low-income students and the routine assumption that racial and social diversity were incompatible with high academic achievement.

Many years have passed since my three kids graduated from Midvale-Lincoln. They proved well-prepared for high school, college and graduate school. All three are fluent in Spanish (and Portuguese) and travel extensively. Two lived abroad and owe their high tech careers, in part, to their language skills and international background.

My cosmopolitan kids are descended from monolingual Wisconsin-born parents who made it to age 50 without a passport. Midvale-Lincoln was their first glimpse of a wider world that they now savor as young adults. Many thanks to the dedicated Midvale-Lincoln teachers who thrive on diversity. You embraced a future that so many feared and taught my children some lessons that their elders still struggle to grasp.

Neil Gleason
Madison

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