



## *SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE*

*April 1, 2014  
(April Fools' Day☺)*

*Superintendent of Schools, Larry Licopoli, Ph.D.*

"Moving from a system of schools to a school system" ☺

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### **1. State Assessments:**

- a. Good luck to our students---let's make sure we honor their work and time that they will have put into these exams.

### **2. Union City Visit:**

- a. The visit was simply superb! Regardless of the fact that Union City is a poor city school district with a higher free and reduced rate than Peekskill, and that they have an 85% ELL population as well as many of the same social and demographic issues as we do, their commitment to best practice was demonstrated over and over again. If you read Improbable Scholars, you would have seen, first hand, the practices, approaches, and staunch commitment to keeping kids first---always. The visiting team will be debriefing shortly and we will have a comprehensive report for your review. Briefly, here are some of the things we learned---
- i. K-12: A clear and thematically aligned approach to curriculum and instructional delivery. They have a curriculum system and they stick to it.
  - Genres are easy to see in hallways and in classrooms. Teachers among the grades are generally around the same place.
  - A highly effective Port of Entry Program for ELL and newcomer students that adjusts to the English language needs of students. A commitment to get kids to their instructional level in their native language first, then transfer to English.

- Readers workshop tables
  - Clear and common local assessment that is evaluated bimonthly and where the data is used to drive instruction. Clear evidence of best practice being used in classrooms plus weekly staff development.
  - The unit of analysis for success is each student –not the group, but by students.
- ii. Evidence of a very concise and proactive plan for restorative discipline helping each student to grow as a person. A wide range of core, elective, and extracurricular programs designed to challenge all students.
- An in-school medical and child care center for all students and students who are parents.
  - Peer Mediation
  - High School “Boot Camp”
- iii. A school system with a clear line of sight on what they hope for each student.
- Each school has a positive sense of identity that reflects the district’s goals. Many positive images of students and staff working together, and taking care of their school.
  - A staff that is most welcoming, proud to be a member of their school and understand that it will take all of them to help their children grow.
- iv. A leadership system where teachers and principals appear to be on the same page due to a purposeful and intentional organization design that strategically and precisely aligns the district (similar to what we are proposing) from a K-12 perspective---ALL IN. 😊

### 3. Principal Interviews

- a. We are getting ready for the April 7 “interview day” where we will be interviewing for the principalship at Woodside, PKMS and PHS.
- i. There are four candidates for each school. Candidates will be taking school tours and meetings with faculty, staff, students and parents. Final interviews will take place later in the afternoon and evening. A debriefing and the selection of

our final 1-2 candidates will follow.

#### **4. Superintendent Classroom Visits**

- a. I can't remember a year where I have been so remiss in not being able to visit our schools in the manner I am used to. Consequently, I will be visiting our schools as much as I can over the next two months. Generally, I like to "pop in" for about 10-15 minutes and I try to be as least intrusive as possible. So, I am asking you not to stop what you are doing and I will find a seat in the class and probably leave within 10 to 15 minutes.

#### **5. 2014-2015 Educational Plan and Budget---**(Revised PPT will be available next week):

##### **a. Initiatives:**

- i. School-Community Strategic Plan
- ii. Pre-K to 5 intensive intervention and enrichment
- iii. Success for All Academy for over age and under credit HS students
- iv. K-12 literacy and reading support for all students
- v. K-5 Enrichment Program
- vi. Expand math and science programming
- vii. Parents as partners in their child's education planning
- viii. Improve communications and transparency
- ix. Address urgent capital needs

##### **b. Budget ---**(Budget goals meet Governor's proposal for rebate):

- i. Highlights
  - GOOD NEWS: We received an additional 1 million dollars in state aid. We are working hard to restore some of the 1.8 million we reduced from the budget. I am targeting the restoration of 2-3 teacher level position as well as a clerical position. There will be no impact on academic and extracurricular programs.
- ii. Proposed Budget: \$79,860,305
  - % increase: 1.86%      \$ increase: \$1,456,639
- iii. Proposed Tax Levy: \$38,016,984

- % increase: 1.57%      \$ increase: \$585,698

**iv.** A Power Point presentation on the budget will be available after the April 1 Board of Education meeting.

**6. Snow Days:**

- a.** REMINDER: Schools will be in session on Monday, April 21.