



SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

June 24, 2014

Superintendent of Schools, Larry Licopoli, Ph.D.

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

1. Highlights from the June 17, 2014 meeting of the Board of Education

- a. Please welcome [Noel Cabassa](#) as our new Guidance Department Chairperson and [Daniel Callahan](#) as our new Director of Teaching and Learning. You may click on Mr. Cabassa and Mr. Callahan's names to read more about their experiences.
- b. I am very pleased to announce that the Board approved my recommendation for increasing music education by .5 and advancing a new (.5) position for Theater and Drama as well. We are hoping to recruit one individual who can help us with introducing instrumentals at Grade 4 and launch a District Theater and Drama program. We anticipate offering two new elective classes at the high school for this purpose.
- c. The Board also heard from three of our PHS Student Council leaders who discussed in public session what they see as our District's strengths and weaknesses. The students, Paige Hill, Afua Yeboah and Jacobi Clarke, were accompanied by their co-advisor, Miriam Skrivanek, and each presented their reflections relative to their education and time at Peekskill High School. It was quite a meeting as the Board and community heard from these three very articulate and thoughtful graduates from the Class of 2014. On behalf of Paige, Afua, Jacobi, and their classmates, I want to express my gratitude to our teachers, administrators and staff who have played a huge part in their education. Thank you.



- d. Congratulations to Peekskill School Board members Lisa Aspinall-Kellawon, Joseph Urbanowicz, and Douglas Glickert who were honored by the New York State School Boards Association's *School Board U* Recognition Program at Tuesday's meeting. The three Board members received NYSSBA's Board Achievement Award which recognized the "extensive time and effort" each member has dedicated to the Peekskill BOE. The award also honored each recipient for "continually expanding their governance knowledge and skills" by participating in a variety of NYSSBA programs.



2. District awarded a Community School Grant: Governor Cuomo visits Hillcrest School!

- a. Thanks to Maxine O'Conner who was the lead grant writer for this project, we now have the opportunity to work with numerous community agencies based on the needs of our kids. With the "school" being the center of facilitating services for our students and their families, we will now more effectively align the needs of our children/families with the appropriate agency, all within a wraparound model.



- b. To date we have been awarded the following grants---each benefitting our educational program.

Grant	Purpose	Amount
NYS	To support a wide range of	\$500,000 (2014-2017)

Community Schools Initiative	support services for Peekskill's students and their families. Services include health care, counseling, nutrition, and job preparation services.	
Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) 3 Program	To help develop a comprehensive approach to recruitment, development, support, retention and equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders as part of the implementation of an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan. To offer professional learning opportunities for faculty and administration with the goal of producing thoughtful, highly effective educators and leaders.	\$366,125 (2014-2015)
Peekskill Priority Pre-K Program (4P's Program)	To create one new full-day Pre-K inclusion class and convert two Pre-K half-day classes to full-day classes, creating a total of three new full-day placements, serving a total of 60 children. The 4P's Program will reduce the waiting list and will ensure more high-quality seats for children with disabilities and English Language Learners.	\$118,000 (2014-2015) \$311,000 (2015-2016)
Math and Science Partnership Program (MSP) Grant: Math	To provide a minimum of 90 hours per teacher of rigorous professional development to support and improve the implementation of math teaching to increase student achievement.	\$157, 646 (2014-2016)
Math and Science	To provide a minimum of 90 hours per teacher of	\$143,351 (2014-2015)

Partnership Program (MSP) Grant: Science	rigorous professional development to support and improve the implementation of science teaching to increase student achievement.	
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3. End of the Year Message-----Summer work

As I approach closing my 43rd school year, I look forward to a very exciting and challenging 2014-2015 school year. Why am I so enthusiastic? Well for one, we are fortunate to be able to have the rare opportunity of having national acclaimed professionals and institutions working side by side with our administrators and teachers. In the next year and a half, and starting this summer, the following professional development opportunities will be rolling out:

- i. Teachscape: Framework for instruction
- ii. Leslie University: Literacy collaborative and Literacy coaches
- iii. McCrel: Teaching Reading in the Content Area
- iv. UCLA Study Center: Professional Learning Walkthroughs
- v. Pace University: Math and Science in-service grades 6 to 8

The second reason I am looking forward to the 2014-2015 school year is due to our Reorganization Plan, which will aid in "flattening" our structures so that our attention is in our classrooms with a clear focus on students learning. This is a new model for the professional collaboration of teachers and administrators working together for one purpose- to help our students learn and grow as individuals. The opportunity to be part of a team, and "being all in" with a clear focus on students learning, literacy and reading is not a common one, and yet it is critical in terms of delivering what we know is essential to improve district-wide literacy and reading.

Finally, balancing all of this out with oversight, teacher leaders, and a Curriculum Instructional and Assessment Team (CIA), are new programs for our children to benefit from including:

- High School Summit Program at Uriah Hill
- Additional high school electives, including a Theater/Drama Program--- more on this later. ☺
- Elementary enrichment and talented program
- Fourth grade instrumental program

I am looking forward to a productive summer working with our teachers and administrators in bringing forth the initiatives for the 2014 -2015 school year. Please check your email throughout the course of the summer as we will be forwarding you periodic follow ups. Finally, I want to wish each of you a well-

deserved relaxing summer break with family and friends.

Sincerely,

Larry Licopoli