



Peekskill City School District
A System Focused on Every Student; Every Day

The Mission of the Peekskill City School District is to educate students in a caring, inspiring environment characterized by a spirit of excellence and high expectations; prepare graduates to meet or exceed standards; graduate students who respect and appreciate cultural diversity; and prepare students to pursue adult lives as contributing citizens of our local and global community.

*Dr. David Fine,
Superintendent of Schools*

*Administration Center, 1031 Elm Street • Peekskill, NY 10566-3499
(914) 737-3300, ext. 302 - FAX: (914) 737-3912
E-mail: dfine@peekskillcsd.org*

Superintendent's E-Corner, October, 2016

"It always seems impossible until it's done." Nelson Mandela

Last night I had the honor to preside over a glorious occasion at one of our local houses of worship. The event recognized our 1st responders, local heroes, police officers, firefighters, and volunteers. These dedicated individuals are a great reflection of the many things that make our city an amazing place to live and work. They help manifest our Peekskill Pride and support us in our progress forward, and for that we continually thank them for their services.

Although it feels like the middle of the year because we truly, "hit the ground running" I wanted to pause and say, thank you for what you all do each and every day. It will take every adult in the lives of these children to move our system. Together we continue to build a village of smart, dedicated, creative, selfless individuals to make each day better than the next. Take care of yourself and each other and have an outstanding October.

Assessments and Observations: Our Fall F/P assessments have been or already have been administered so as all schools, k-8 have a true benchmark of our youngster's literacy. Super job to all staff involved in the training and administration. Our administrative team will be starting observations, October 1st forward. As we align our instructional approaches with respect to content/language objective approaches and the use of higher-order questions, please remember that the classroom culture, social/emotional accommodations of our youngsters, and staff/student connections are paramount. Meet at door; say hi; smile; give them a pencil; shake a hand; pick on the one without their hand up; make a good phone call; Go get em' and have fun!

Ad. Team Welcome: Again, welcome Ellen Hackett who has been everywhere and dedicated to our alignment, equity, and professional excellence within our SPED world and special services programs; great to have you aboard. Also, welcome Courtney Simon, our LEAP coordinator and MS administrator. She has taken Peekskill in with open arms and it is a pleasure to work with and have you as part of the team. Carmen Vargas, back again, and here to stay! She is doing a great job with our early childhood program. Already new and exciting programs and events are underway. Lastly, welcome Rodney Arthur who is making a significant impact in the lives of our adults and youth at the HS. An advocate of excellence and a hard worker who may email almost as much as me. Rodney, thank you for being a part of the solution and keep up the great work. We deserve that!

Fall Production and 5k: Terry Sandler and his team are already working on the HS Fall production. Keep your eyes and ears out for this exciting production (more to come soon). **Get those running shoes out!** The 5k is around the corner (October 15th)

copy/paste link for video <https://ensemble.lhric.org/Watch/Cy5j6W8K> sign up online. All proceeds go back to our schools. Thank you to our 5k council and all our participants and sponsors. See you out there!

Pink Out: On Friday, October 14, we plan to Pink Out Peekskill! All Peekskill schools (Pre-K -12) and Central Office administration are invited to participate in the day. On this day, ALL students and staff are encouraged to wear pink in commemoration of breast cancer awareness. Each school will be taking a group photo, so make sure to dress in pink! On Sunday, October 16, 2016 at 9:30 a.m. members of Peekskill CSD will gather at Manhattanville College to take part in the Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk.

Planning: Our work this year will align with both our District Comprehensive Instructional Plans and the School Comprehensive Educational Plans. These plans align district wide and between schools. Your school leadership teams have been hard at work designing, articulating, and communicating this journey. If not already, familiarize yourself with these expectations all six tenets.

Grants: This summer we wrote and applied for, “My Brother’s Keeper” grant. We are hoping to know our status shortly. This grants partners with close to 20-agencies in Peekskill focused on every student; every day (more to come on this). Secondly, the state just put out the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the community grant aka LEAP. The state has expanded the scope and we are eligible to examine potential programs in Hillcrest and the HS. In true “state fashion” the monies allocated were not equitable to the expansion of scope. Regardless, we are going to analyze what we can so as if we receive these monies we can provide an extended program in some manner, 4-12. It is an exciting opportunity to go from LEAP 1.0 to LEAP 2.0 and support more of our learners.

Attendance: Your voice, presence, energy, and leadership make a difference in the lives of children every day. You may not even know it; but I know first-hand there are children that simply look in your room every morning to see if you are there. It happened to me at all levels and I see it here with others. Take care of yourself, your family, and your world. Margaret Meade said, never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed that’s all who ever have.”

Altaris: Altaris works with our system on a variety of safety/security measures including but limited to basic language, protocols, software/hardware recommendations, community development around safety/security, collaborations with teams within and between schools, district-wide initiatives around safety and more. We are all part of the solution. If you see something, say something! We would rather investigate and be wrong, than not look into things at all!! Be that change and keep your head high and eyes wide open.

Growth and Programs: We are already planning for 17-18 as Peekskill continues to grow, which require explicit work around building space, staffing implications, and programmatic accommodations. Our advocacy continues and our quest for equity will never waiver. Your voice makes a difference. Communicate with your building leaders regarding needs in a pro-active and collaborative fashion. We are meeting next week to discuss various implications around our expectations for excellence as well as our increased enrollment and needs to accommodate all learners in the best manner.

Some Creative Assessment Strategies (copy/paste): http://www.edutopia.org/discussion/10-fun-filled-formative-assessment-ideas?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=socialflowhttp

Great Article and Opportunity (copy/paste): http://www.edutopia.org/blog/finding-the-gold-within-mark-phillips?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=socialflow

Finding Educational Gold

This film has almost unlimited teaching potential for social studies and English classrooms.

Teachers might use it to examine the art of documentary filmmaking. How did the director establish the exceptional intimacy with the main subjects? What is the purpose in using the many close-ups? Karina purposely films the young men in nature settings and not in the typical city settings most often used in films about African American teens. What is her purpose in doing this?

Alchemy, Inc.'s approach to changing these lives is a subject in itself. Your students could look at the connection between Jung, Campbell, and Meade, storytelling, journaling, and drumming as a process. A brief introduction to each of these important thinkers should be a first step in this exploration. Could this process also be used with other at-risk kids who aren't African American? Could some parts of that process be used here, in our class and school?

Finally, the subject of African American males in our culture is obviously of critical importance. Teachers might consider a unit on the topic that would include [*The Pact*](#), a book by and about three young African American men on a collaborative journey to become doctors.

Finding the Gold Within is available free to teachers for a limited time if they [write directly to the director, Karina Epperlein](#), and agree to share with her how they've used the film.

This film, the program, and these young men are a gift for educators. Take advantage of that gift.