



**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*

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## **Superintendent's E-Corner**

*"A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows." St. Francis of Assisi*

**A great school opening:** It seems longer than 18 days of instruction, but that is where we are. Each day has been filled with many exciting activities aligned with our mission and goals as a District. Our Teacher Leaders are collaborating with central office, each other, and most importantly, colleagues in their buildings. Our residency program is off to a wonderful start, meeting with the mentors and then the mentors/mentees together. Schedules seem to be in order, buildings are looking good, our observation schedule is in place, and staffing seems to have settled down and is close to completion. We will continue to "stay the course" with respect to our curricular, instructional, and assessment work (no curveballs or sliders, just best practices as we have been trained to do and have been discussing). Any additional programs, thoughts, or courses are to be vetted through our CIA CORE team to remain aligned and consistent with our approaches and work. We will *not* co-sign to a variety of practices and continue to go in multiple directions. Together we will keep one clear line of sight; focused on our programs/best approaches relative to CIA work. Doing it any other way only hinders progress and adds to the challenge. The keywords here are, "*student centered*."

This past Friday during our building-leaders conversation, we talked about the differences between being overwhelmed and just plain *busy*. The latter does not seem to go away, whether you talk to anyone in any job, young or not as young. Even my retired friends and family; they say things like, "It's great, but I am still so, so busy I don't know how I had time to work." The definition of, "overwhelm" is to, "bury or drown beneath a huge mass." Scary stuff, but if you step back this is actually something we have control over in some manner. Our jobs require explicit planning, staying ahead of all the "moving parts" relative to adolescent/human/academic/community/political needs (that can be overwhelming unto itself). As George Costanza from Seinfeld used to say, "Serenity now." In order to stay ahead, we must work hard on our time management, organization, collaborative reflection, how much we do and where we ask for support, think efficiently/effectively, all with a growth mindset. Our jobs are to focus on children; create an aligned, relevant, engaging, and rigorous teaching/learning experience for our youngsters to succeed today, and tomorrow. In the same breath, we must juggle our own personal worlds and professional environments. I am proud to be a part of this system, dedicated and focused on supporting our work in a consistent, successful, and logical manner. I enjoy reading Fullan, and he states that change is a process; not an event and that deep and sustained reform depends on many of us, not just a few who are destined to be extraordinary. As a team, we are part of that solution as every stakeholder is required and has the power to make a difference. Good work to all of us within this great business and wonderful system of Peekskill. It is all about finding "yes," moving in the same direction, having clear expectations, setting aligned goals, planning, and remaining focused and explicit in a peaceful fashion, so as we all stay, "on top" of our piles (not below them) and simply remain *busy*.

**Safety and Security:** You may have heard me say it once and I will continue to say it, *safety and security is paramount*, this includes school climate and culture. Thank you to our security team and BERT teams for remaining diligent with respect to our buildings, staff and students. We are examining additional measures with regard to the safety and security of our buildings. This includes additional security cameras, technology

improvements, better door systems, building-based programs, and discussions with the police. Building leaders will discuss along the way and we will share more details regarding these resources as we get closer to final decisions. As always, we are open to thoughts and conversations regarding this matter. We will have building conversations regarding protocols and expectations sometime in the next month. Please note that all of us are part of this solution. If you see something; say something. We would rather investigate and be wrong than do nothing at all. We are the eyes and ears in every room and every hallway, and we work together to provide an environment whereas teaching/learning is the primary focus. When things occur, they are dealt with firmly, fairly, and consistently. This takes all of us being a part of the solution. Keep up the good work and remain focused on our student's social, academic, and emotional needs, every day.

This is a poem from our famous *Peekskill Middle School Literary Magazine*, 2015. Enjoy...

### **“If I were in Charge of the World” by Kayla Avery**

If I were in charge of the world  
I would cancel violence and mustard.

If I were in charge of the world  
There would be unicorns and peace.

If I were in charge of the world  
You wouldn't have smokers and deadly things.

You wouldn't have chores or spiders  
You wouldn't have smelly smells or school lunch.  
(Peekskill is getting better every day, my addition)

And a person who forgets to brush their hair  
And sometimes forgets to say thank you  
Would still be allowed to be  
In charge of the world.