



**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.*

*Rodney Arthur*  
*Principal*

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February 3, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we complete the first week of the third marking period, you are encouraged to monitor your child's attendance to school and their report card grades. As you may be aware, the students' final report card grade will be determined as follows:

**Full-year Courses:** The final report card grade will be an average of the first four marking period report card grades and the final exam or grade on the New York State Regents examination. This means that the final report card grade will be the average of five grades. Each marking period and the final exam or regents is weighted 20%, together totaling 100%.

**Half-year Courses:** These courses are designed for two marking periods. Each marking period is weighted 40% and the final exam or regents is weighted 20%, together totaling 100%.

It is imperative that you stay informed regarding your child's effort, grades and attendance to school. Signing up for the **parent portal** is the best way to monitor your child's performance in school. This tool allows you to access your child's *attendance in school, completion of homework assignments and projects, tests and quizzes grades, lateness to class and school*. If you have not signed up for the parent portal, please see Mrs. Maria Gordineer in the PHS Guidance Office. While you are there, please be sure to speak to Mrs. Gordineer about scholarship opportunities for your child. Our children need encouragement from home and school in order to demonstrate their greatness.

As a parent, I know firsthand that being a parent can be challenging. My children range in age from 8 to 22 years old. Research indicates that teenagers experience more changes during this period of their lives than at any other point. As a school community, we are available to assist you! At the high school, we have strong community partnerships with Hudson Valley Health Care, Andrus and Westchester Jewish Community Services. Each of these organizations offers specific services to students and, in some cases, to families. For additional information, please contact the contact the Guidance Office at 737-0201.

The City School District of Peekskill has partnered with the Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality of New York University. TAC-D is contracted through the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) Office of Special Education to develop, implement, and assess a process of providing comprehensive technical assistance and professional development trainings to New York State School Districts. The TAC-D trainers provide a platform for teachers and administrators to confront sensitive issues such as *race, ethnicity, and cultural differences* as they relate to students' experiences in school.

At the high school, since the start of the school year, the entire faculty has engaged in practices best described as *cultural competency*, which is supported by the work promoted by TAC-D. "*Cultural competency is the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills.*" As educators living in a diverse world and working in an ethnically, economically, and culturally diverse community such as Peekskill, it is critically important that we develop an understanding of cultural competence and a willingness to amend our practices and those of colleagues, friends and family members, when needed. See the 6 minute video link below shared with staff at the February faculty meeting. It provides a great orientation to cultural competency. <https://youtu.be/U42MApeXi9w>

There is much to be proud of at Peekskill High School!! Mrs. Sharon Courtney, Chairperson of the Social Studies Department, is teaching a new course titled ***Classism, Racism and Sexism***. One of the goals of this class is to bring about awareness and inform students of critical issues that fall within these areas. As students become more informed, they find their voices and take steps to address the ills in today's society. In some cases, they are able to reflect, analyze and challenge their daily practices and those of their family members and friends. As a result, some students find themselves adopting a new outward look by changing their way of thinking and habits. Ms. Elizabeth Fernandez is a student who has found great value in the course material and has written a BLOG documenting her thoughts and experiences on the topic of racism. Attached is a link to her BLOG, and several people have responded including a Dutchess County Legislator. Elizabeth's work is personal and striking in many ways. Here is a link to Elizabeth's piece: [Elizabeth Fernandez Word Press Link](#)

Our fabulous City Singers have been invited to the Paramount Theater to be the opening act for *The Manhattan Transfer* as they celebrate their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary on **Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>** at 8 p.m. This is an amazing honor and we should be tremendously proud of our students as they continue to soar to higher heights.

On **Saturday, February 4** our amazing students' art work was on displayed at the *Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art* alongside accomplished artists like Faith Ringgold, author of *Tar Beach*. This is a great recognition of our students' work. In future years, they will be able to reflect on, and know the significance of, this acknowledgment.

On **Saturday, February 4** our very own Miss. Brittney Pauta won third place, in her category, at the *JSHS Science Research Competition*. This makes Brittney the first student ever to win from Peekskill High School at the Science Fairs. We are happy for her and motivated to win more at the WESEF competition, which will be held on **March 4<sup>th</sup>**.

Mr. Carlo Vidrini, Robotics Teacher, continues to amaze me with his *passion, dedication and service* to our students!!! Carlo volunteers his time and resources to our students on the weekends (*Saturday and Sundays*) and his efforts are greatly appreciated by our students.

- The Peekskill High School Robotics Team 4243 Iron Red Devils brought home their first trophy after competing in an FTC robotic competition at Riverside High School in Yonkers.
- On **Sunday, February 5** the Peekskill High School Robotics Team 4243 will compete in the FTC Robotics Championship Competition at PACE University. They will compete against the 30 best teams from Albany, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey.
- In **April 2017**, the Iron Devils will compete in the Rube Goldberg Competition at the Engineering Expo at White Plains High School. In 2016, the Iron Devils took second place in this competition. When we win it this year, we will be one of seventeen teams from around the country to be invited to participate in the national competition in Ohio.

On **Saturday, February 4** Dr. Margie Daniels and Officer Andre Wright participated in a panel discussion regarding issues related to substance abuse and addiction. The event was co-sponsored by the Peekskill Youth Bureau and the Peekskill branch chapter of the NAACP. You are encouraged to join both organizations. ***We are stronger together!!***

Special thanks to the teachers in the World Language Department for participating in the National Foreign Language Week, which will be the first week in March. This occasion will be marked with a number of activities, including decorating our hallways with flags and streamers. In addition, we will post students' posters throughout the school. We will start displaying decorations on **Tuesday, February 28**. If you are interested in assisting, please see any of the teachers in the World Language Department.

On **Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>** our amazing students received encouraging advice from members of the Westchester Panhellenic, which is a community-based organization comprised of nine historically black fraternities and sororities. This organization is responsible for providing thousands of students with scholarship awards and for participating in various community-based initiatives. Special thanks to Dr. Daniels and Mrs. Moore for coordinating the event.

By working together, we will make Peekskill High School a gem that glitters! Let's pull our resources and energy together to serve our children and provide them with a rich experience. Please get involved and stay involved. ***Join and/or donate to our fabulous PTO!!*** They serve the Peekskill community each and every day. *"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."* - Henry Ford

Sincerely,

Rodney Arthur  
Principal