



Mary Keenan Foster, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

Peekskill City School District

A System Focused on Every Student, Every Day

The Mission of the Peekskill City School District is to educate and empower all students to strive for excellence as lifelong learners who embrace diversity and are contributing members of a global society.

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Dear Peekskill Community,

It is April 2nd and I am looking out my window at snow falling to the ground. The remnants of a winter still linger, however, we know that it will be temporary and warm days are close by. We are approaching the New York State exams for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics and New York State English as a Second Language exam (NYSESLAT). Federal law requires that every public school test students yearly in English Language Arts and mathematics yearly in grades 3-8, and in science at least once during grades 3-5 and 6-9.

We recognize the value of assessing students to help inform our curriculum, our programs, and most importantly to ascertain how well our students are learning. These assessments are used for curriculum and programmatic purposes only and are not used to make decisions regarding acceleration or retention or to make decisions regarding teacher effectiveness.

The New York State Department of Education clearly heard from the parents and from the field and the ELA and mathematics assessments are now untimed. In addition, the ELA and mathematics assessments are shortened in length and are administered during two morning sessions. Communication to parents in grades 3-8 was sent last month and principals will be following up this week as well. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the assessments, please reach out to your child's principal or to me.

Parents will soon have an invitation to participate in a survey, the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) Survey, which launches Monday, April 9, 2018. The DTSDE Survey is part of the New York State Department of Education requirements for Focus Schools. Survey questions address leadership and capacity, school leader practices and decisions, curriculum development and support, teacher practices and decisions, student social and emotional developmental health, and family and community engagement. While this is a state-mandated survey, we see it as the start of an ongoing conversation about how we can provide high-quality educational opportunities for every student, every day.

We look forward to comparing the 2016-2017 survey results with the 2017-2018 to see the areas of growth, as well as the areas that we continue to work to improve. Thank you for your support of our district and our community.

Take care of yourselves and of others.

Educationally yours,
Mary Keenan Foster
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