



Peekskill City School District

Our mission is to educate and empower all students to strive for excellence as life-long learners who embrace diversity and are contributing members of a global society.

Dr. David Mauricio
Superintendent of Schools

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April 1, 2020

Dear Peekskill Families,

Our present and future reality is unprecedented for our generation. I think we can all agree that the last few weeks have been replete with uncertainty and challenges. Decisions are being made at a rapid pace in conjunction with the professional medical guidance we receive and the mandates from the State Education Department, County leaders and the Governor's office. As we begin a new month, I encourage everyone to continue moving forward as best as we can under these circumstances. I know that we have all had to adjust to our roles that include maintaining our households; supporting the education of our children; caring for our family; working from home; social distancing; physical activity; emotional wellness and a variety of other important daily tasks. As a district, we understand that everyone is adjusting to these constant changes in their own way and at their own pace. There is no single formula that works for every family, and with that said, I remind everyone to continue making the decisions that are best for you and your family. While it is critical that our students remain engaged in learning, let us also not forget to nurture the physical and emotional well-being of ourselves and loved ones.

NYS Directives Regarding Continued Learning Through April 15

On March 27, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.11, which extended the time schools would be closed through April 15, 2020. In that Executive Order, Governor Cuomo stated that all schools must now use any scheduled vacation/snow days for remote learning. The Deputy Secretary of Education clarified that this Order includes the upcoming spring break week, which our District had previously scheduled for April 6-10. The consequence of failing to abide by this mandate would force our District to forfeit the State Aid we would normally receive for each of those days, and further put Peekskill at risk of losing aid for all of the days included in our COVID-19 closures. If we incur this loss of aid, it would result in a devastating impact on our District's 2020-21 budget.

Therefore, in compliance with the Governor's order, next week will continue to be a week of distance learning for students. I also want to be sensitive to the religious implications for many of our families during this week, so once again, I encourage you to organize your home-schooling schedule in a fashion that works best for your family.

Among other items addressed, the Governor has also directed that any school board elections scheduled to take place in April or May of 2020 are postponed until at least June 1, 2020. Further guidance on this topic, as well as for our annual budget vote, will follow once we receive additional directives from the State.

Continued Learning Resources - Phase II

Since schools are closed for an extended period of time, we are planning our next phase of remote learning at the elementary and secondary levels. We will update you shortly and adjust our websites accordingly. We have created a webpage on our middle school and high school websites that includes useful Continued

Learning resources for secondary parents. You can find these resources under each page's "Parent Resource" tab, from our "Continued Learning" headline block or by [clicking here](#).

Special Services Updates

[Please see this letter](#) from Director of Special Services Mrs. Ellen Gerace which includes excerpts from a NYS Education Department memo regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities during statewide school closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Communicating with Parents

Please note that to protect employee privacy, some staff may be calling families from private numbers. If a number shows up as "Private Caller" please know that this may be a PCSD staff member reaching out to you.

April's Commitment to Character Theme: Friendship

We often rely on our friends to help us through tough times. Right now, being apart from friends may be adding to feelings of isolation. As part of our April Commitment to Character theme, we're asking our school community to share creative ways to connect with friends while maintaining social distancing. This could be something as simple as making a phone call to check in on someone, arranging virtual "get togethers," or sharing a photo of a favorite memory with a friend you miss. Share your friendship stories with us online by tagging #PCSDC2C. We will share your stories to help inspire others in our school community!

Conversations with the Superintendent

On Thursday, April 2 at 6:30PM, I will be hosting a virtual "Conversations with the Superintendent" event. The topic of discussion will be, "Leading Forward in the COVID-19 Crisis." Please join me as I welcome special guests: Peekskill Mayor Andre Rainey, Youth Bureau Executive Director Mrs. Tuesday McDonald and Peekskill Parent Teacher Organization Vice President Isabel Pipolo. The event will be live streamed on the District's website homepage: www.peakskillcsd.org. Community members can submit questions in advance to: PR@Peekskillschools.org.

Census 2020

Today, April 1 is Census Day! While we certainly have many other things to focus our attention on, let us not forget every family's obligation to help ensure Peekskill receives an accurate count. Our Census count will affect our funding for schools and local programs for the next decade. For more information, [click here](#).

Finally, I want to remind our families to prepare for an extended closure beyond the April 15 date we were given by New York State, as guidance from the federal level now suggests social distancing until April 30. Please remember we are unable to independently extend our closure dates before the State guides us to do so without jeopardizing our State aid. I hope this clarifies our actions and the timing of our communication.

In closing, I want to thank our school community for their support, understanding and positivity. Additionally, I want to thank all of our staff, parents and students for their hard work and adapting to our present reality. We will continue to get through this time together. My thoughts are with you all.

Sincerely,



Dr. David Mauricio
Superintendent of Schools

