



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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Dear Peekskill City School District:

The lives of our families, staff and students have been recently impacted to varying degrees due to the COVID-19 closure of schools, health realities, financial stressors and a myriad of other challenges, which have been felt by families across our county and the Peekskill community. As a school community, we continue to work together to assist our Peekskill Schools' families during this time – we have provided over 78,000 meals; supported countless students and parents in coping with health and wellness issues; improved our on-line learning; and remain focused on additional important initiatives to help see our community through the current healthcare crisis.

On May 25, 2020 another challenge was placed on the doorsteps of our nation's moral consciousness. The unconceivable and tragic death of George Floyd changed our collective focus from assisting our communities through a healthcare pandemic and an economic crisis to now assessing our moral compass. Mr. Floyd's death is a bleak reminder of the injustices that exist in our society and the lack of humanity that some individuals in authority hold within their hearts and minds. I have had the pleasure of growing up with four amazing friends who became NYC police officers; worked with committed school resource officers; and have met many great police officers in the City of Peekskill. I believe that what bonds us is the belief that we are all equal; that institutions of influence exist to serve; and that the pursuit of the American dream should be attainable by all who pursue it with passion and hard work. It is times like the present that make us realize that this cornerstone belief is not shared by all. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, "What can we do in our roles to ensure that all forms of equity exist for all of our children and the generations to follow?"

As a school district, we must now pivot our focus to the emotional well-being of our most valued treasures in our community - our children. We recently joined the Peekskill Youth Bureau in a virtual town hall with students and the community. This event focused on stopping violence on a local level. We continue to collaborate with City leadership and the Peekskill Police Department to synergize our efforts. Toward this end, we will soon be hosting small group meetings with students facilitated by athletic coaches, My Brother's Keeper and Girls Inc. leaders and other staff members. These efforts will focus on checking in with our students and engaging them in dialogue about Mr. Floyd's tragic death. Our District will also co-host a town hall meeting with elected officials in which students will share their perspective and ideas for action. Our "Guardians of Equity" committee will meet to advance our work in addressing the disproportionality issues we face as a school district and continually improve our school climate. I will share more details as we finalize our plans. Additionally, we are constantly improving our practices to meet our Board of Education's policy on diversity recruitment. Our truly diverse leadership team serves as an awesome example of our mission. We will also continue to offer courses which engage students in intellectual dialogue regarding systemic classism, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

It is important that we, as a District, continue to allow our students to take part in these important conversations and have influence on the decisions being made by those in power. We stand resolved to continue to work with our community, City and regional leaders to positively impact the national narrative about equality, justice and opportunity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Mauricio". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dr. David Mauricio
Superintendent of Schools