

Peekskill CSD PTO Committee/Building Report Form

Submission Date: 3/6/2016 Month & Year: December 2016

Committee/Building: Peekskill High School

Items Requiring a Vote:

N/A

Items Requiring Discussion:

- None

Items for Information Only:

I am tremendously proud and honored to be the Principal of Peekskill High School. We have a committed faculty who strive each day to provide your children with excellence. Our motto at PHS is as follows: ***Building Bridges of Excellence for Every student, Every Day.*** Our overarching goal is to ***create a safe an orderly school environment that permits teachers to implement effective learning strategies that will allow students to maximize their full potential.*** We can only achieve this goal by forming and sustaining a partnership with you. There is much to be proud of at Peekskill High School. We are on an upward move. Keep reading.

On **Tuesday, February 28th**, our amazing student volunteers, with the assistance of Mrs. Angela Byrne and Mr. George Goess, collaborated with the New York Blood Center to hold a blood drive. This was our third blood drive for the 2016-17 school year. Because of their collective effort, we achieved the following results:

- Registered Donors: 101
- Deferred Donors: 27
- Collected Whole Blood: 65
- Collected ALYX: 18 (from 9 donors)
- Total Units Collected: 83
- **Total Lives SAVED: 249**

On **March 4th**, our very own City Singers performed three songs at a charitable event to raise funds for Peekskill residents who lost their home as a result of fire earlier this year. Collectively, over \$5,000 dollars was raised.

In the Science Department, Chromebooks are utilized in all classrooms. At the last professional development day, which was held in February, science teachers were introduced to new probeware, online interactive activities and testing programs. The goal of the department is to integrate technology into the science content which will increase students' engagement and enhance teaching and learning. Teachers in the science department have started inter-classroom

visitation to provide each other with feedback and share some of the best instructional practices from across the discipline. This ongoing practice will serve to encourage cycles of improvement department-wide. At the upcoming department meeting, teachers will begin a process of data analysis by reviewing students' performance on previously administered New York State Regents examinations. In this process, teachers will analyze students' responses to regent based questions and determine how closely aligned the questions are to content reviewed in class. With this information, teachers will be able to also teach this content and embed similar questions into their daily practice, which will familiarize students with these skills and improve their performance on the June New York State Regent assessments.

On **Saturday, March 4th**, our very own Miss Britney Pauta made Peekskill proud by winning the Greg Horace Award certificate for a creative and innovative approach to research at the Westchester Science and Engineering Fair held at Sleepy Hollow High School. At this competition there were more than 500 participants who competed from 40 area schools. Ms. Pauta presented her research, which was conducted at New York Medical College during the summer of her junior year PHS, titled: *Evaluation of Oxidative DNA Damage Caused in White Leghorn Chicken Liver Using Chicken Egg Genotoxicity Assay (CEGA)*. Ms. Pauta is the first student winner from Peekskill High School at both JSHS and WESEF Fairs.

In the English Department, after the school-wide trip to the Paramount Theater to learn more about the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and his landmark "*I Have a Dream*" speech, the English teachers further discussed the performance with students. *What was the central idea of Dr. King's speech? To what degree has his dream been realized? How would Dr. King respond to the modern day United States?* Students considered and then discussed these thought provoking questions through examining history and our contemporary world. Moving into March, once again freshmen students are participating in lively workshops guided by teaching artists from the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. This year, Shakespeare's classic *Romeo and Juliet* is the focus of the workshops and culminating performance from HVSF's touring company.

The teachers of the World Language Department continue to celebrate the National Foreign Language Week. The first floor hallway is decorated with flags and streamers reflecting the countries where various languages are spoken. There are activities planned for students, parents and faculty throughout the week.

- **Monday, March 6th** – Auditorium from 3 to 5 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 7th** – Auditorium from 3 to 5 p.m.
- **Wednesday, March 8th** – Cafeteria from 3 to 4 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 9th** – Cafeteria from 3 to 5 p.m.

In the Social Studies Department, students presently scheduled for Global Studies and U.S. History will sit for a mock regents examination starting the week of **March 20th**. This test will serve as a benchmark assessment to gauge students' readiness for the June New York State Regents examination. After completing the assessment, students will receive direct feedback from their teacher highlighting their performance and noting areas that require improvement. With regent preparation classes scheduled to begin shortly (*additional information is forthcoming*), students will be able to concentrate their efforts in identified areas. Teachers continue to update the curriculum map for their respective areas to reflect shifts in the content. Because of the efforts of Mrs. Anita Prentice, students at Peekskill High School had the unique opportunity

to meet Mr. Aaron Mair, the first African American President of the Sierra Club. The mission of the Sierra Club is, *"To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives."* Mr. Mair is originally from New York and a graduate of Peekskill High School.

On **Monday, March 6, 2017**, Ms. Sonia Goldstein, a Holocaust survivor, will visit Peekskill High School and speak to students studying Global Studies about her experience. During her talk, Ms. Goldstein will share with students her firsthand account of being forced to live in the Vilnius Ghetto and then being transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp in Nazi occupied Poland. Students will gain a valuable experience by learning about genocide through the eyes of Ms. Goldstein. This authentic experience will prompt students to become more socially conscious and civically engaged. Moreover, it will provide students with an opportunity to experience history in a unique way by being able to question someone who lived the experience. This rich experience is aligned with our curriculum as students have been discussing and learning about World War 2 and the Holocaust. Students will get an in-depth understanding of what life was like during the Holocaust and the importance of being pro-active in the community.

In the Mathematics Department, in preparation for the June regents administration, the department performed an in-depth analysis of the level I data (*multiple choice*) for the Algebra I regents to identify areas of strength, misconception and error response to inform instruction. Also in preparation for the June regents, the department is creating a schedule of regents preparation hours for Algebra I and Geometry to optimize students' preparation opportunities before school, after school and on Saturdays. The schedule will be posted on the high school's website after spring break.

The staff at the Summit Academy held an honor roll ceremony celebrating the achievements of 27 students who earned honor roll or high honor roll status during the 2nd marking period. Dutchess Community College visited and presented to the entire student body. The focus of the presentation was college basics 101. During this visit, 5 students earned on-the-spot acceptance to D.C.C. Yoga is coming to the Summit Academy! Beginning March 9, a small group of students will be engaged in *MINDFULNESS . . . a new approach to dealing with challenges in life*.

In the Art Department, the teachers submitted artwork to the Garrison Art Center entitled ***"Wired Within Society."*** This piece was created by students in the advanced art class. The objective was for students to create a collaborative work of art for the Garrison Art Center's theme art show *"Icon Pop"* viewed by 1960's Pop Art. The students determined the messages that were behind the pieces and how to create their own piece about today's social issues. The show will be presented from **Saturday March 4th to Saturday March 11th**. The Young Docents 2017 are hard at work training at Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art for the reception on **MAY 10th**.

On **March 8th**, there will be a parent informational on the Advanced Placement examination held at Peekskill High School in the library from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This is an important meeting and parents are asked to bring their children with them to this event.

On **March 15th**, Peekskill High School will hold its annual National Honor Society Induction Ceremony. This is a special occasion for students and their families. Member of the Peekskill

community are welcomed to come out and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our students who, on a daily basis, display *Leadership, Character, Scholarship* and *Service*. The event will be held in the PHS auditorium and will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.

On **March 16**, ten students in the 10th grade will be attending the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center Student Leadership Conference at Iona College. The students will learn about various human right issues that are going on in the world and choose one issue to bring back to the Peekskill community. The students will then develop programs to raise awareness for the issue during Upstander Week in May.

As we approach the midway mark of the third marking period, you are strongly encouraged to monitor your child's attendance to school and their report card grades. You are asked to make an appointment to meet with your child's teachers or school counselor. Your involvement is significant to your child's success in school. A recent review of the attendance data for the high school indicate about 10% of students are late to school each day and about 5% of students are absent at least one day a week. For the past several months, the administrative team has worked closely with school teachers, counselors and our social worker to conduct outreach to families to address this concern. From reviewing the attendance data, we know that if a student is absent 11 days or more for a half-year course which runs for 20 weeks; there is a 60% chance that the student will fail the course. For a full-year course, if a student is absent 20 or more days, there is a 65% chance that the students will fail the class. By working together, we will be able to put an end to this concern and increase students' attendance and work production at school. Education matters! It creates opportunities and allows children to accomplish goals and their dreams.

By working together, we will help our children to achieve greatness! As expressed by Senator Elizabeth Warren, *"It's a simple idea: We all do better when we work together and invest in our future."* Our children are our hopes, dreams and future. Let's encourage them and provide them with a solid foundation to dream and accomplish the extraordinary.

Submitted by: Rodney Arthur, Principal