

Peekskill CSD PTO Committee Report Form

Submission Date: October 11, 2021

Month & Year: October 2021

Committee: Advocacy

Items Requiring a Vote: None.

Items Requiring Discussion: None.

Items for Information Only:

- **Safe Routes to School.** A partnership of PCSD, Peekskill Walks, and the PTO, the coalition continues to meet and plan.
 - Site visits to each school are ongoing on Thursday mornings to observe students entering our schools; debrief meetings follow the visits on Fridays at 3:30 pm.
 - **Uriah Hill:** Visit scheduled for Friday, 11/12 (11/11 is Veterans Day). In many ways, this is the model school, as Ms. Vargas has implemented many logical systems to keep students and staff safe at pickup and dropoff.
 - **Woodside:** Thursday, 11/4.
 - **Oakside:** Visit occurred Thursday, 10/1. Many have expressed concerns about traffic and dangers outside the school on social and other media, which is why we chose this as the first school. PCSD, PWalks, the PTO, and city leaders all witnessed.
 - **Hillcrest:** Thursday, 10/14.
 - **Middle School:** Thursday, 10/21. Very little busing to this school, but walkers, student drivers, and staff in need of education.
 - **High School:** Thursday, 10/28.
 - The group has already “won” a crossing guard for the students at Oakside.
 - A survey about safety to/from school for walkers/busers/car-transported students is currently being designed. We expect to make it available at November’s Saturday Academy.
 - The intention of the coalition is to open up involvement to other parents and students once site visits are accomplished and priorities are established, so that we can make a reasonable plan for action steps this year.
 - Another goal of the coalition is to use this campaign to train students and families in advocacy, civics, local government, etc.

- **PNAACP Education Committee.** When possible, the advocacy committee continues to attend the PNAACP’s monthly education committee meetings led by Amy Perlow and Adriana Frega. These are typically the second Monday of every month at 7:30 pm (via Zoom). From Monday, 10/11:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and NYSED's initiative
 - Framework announced in April 2021 by NYSED Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr.
 - Dr. Daniels's DEI role at PCSD?
 - What action steps are happening?
 - Curricula changes? New books?
 - PNAACP wants to hold a "town hall"-type meeting, most likely in December
- DEI, CRT, and the response from Save Our Schools (SOS) and other conservative groups, which typically conflate DEI/CRT
 - Dr. Lyons resigns in Lakeland; SOS claimed "victory" for his resignation, but it seems unlikely that DEI was the immediate cause, as many in Lakeland - e.g. unions, board members - had issues with him for years. This is the "Peekskill area" NAACP, not just Peekskill, and Lakeland is a neighboring district.
 - NYT article 10/11; [Educator's Black Lives Matter Email Upends Her District](#)
 - Superintendents under attack
 - Contested school boards
 - Teachers need support
 - Can PCSD survey the staff?
 - 10/14 is #teachtruth (George Floyd's birthday) day; "Year of Purpose" kickoff:
<https://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com/year-of-purpose.html>
- 10/22 will be the NAACP's education committee's next meeting with PCSD (last met in August)
- State Aid. Increased state education funding, Foundation Aid, and the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE).
 - New PCSD programs, etc. as a result of new aid.
 - New psychologists at schools
 - Stated focus on SEL
 - Actual courses for students?
 - Peer mediation
 - After school programs
 - Advocacy will still be needed now and in the future.

Our next advocacy meeting will be November 18th at 7 pm.